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**Learning English as a foreign language: eliciting young Chilean children's views.**

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Centre of Applied Linguistics in the University of Warwick.**

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## **Abstract**

The teaching and learning of English has become a major issue around the globe. In light of the current reality, many countries have decided to include within their school policies the teaching of English as a subject from an early age (Pinter, 2006; Kolb, 2007). But so far only a limited amount of research has been conducted in primary English contexts and specifically, little is known about how young learners perceive English in the curriculum, what they think about it, what are the things they prefer when learning and those aspects children are not really fond of. Little research regarding these issues has been conducted with children (Kolb, 2007) overall. This longitudinal study attempts to implement an intervention in two schools in Chile with 7-8-year-old children with the aim to discover to what extent and how children could reflect about the ways they learn and are taught English in primary school in Chile. The use of different participatory activities was employed as a way to encourage children to reflect about learning English. The data drawn from this study revealed that children as young as seven and eight years old were very enthusiastic and were able to clearly reflect on their own processes to learn English as well as to talk about the importance of English for them. During my fieldwork, I designed active learning tools for collecting data. This study provided great contributions to adding empirical insights relating to issues underlying researching with children. Furthermore, this study also provides a general understanding of how young learners make sense of learning English the primary level in Chile. Lastly, the implications of this study can help inform current practice for teachers and a point of start for developing appropriate pedagogies for young learners of English in Chile.

## **CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter takes an attempt to provide a general overview of the context where this study was conducted. Firstly, I will open this chapter by presenting how the Chilean Educational context works in general in terms of policy and practice. Secondly, I will focus the discussion by specifically addressing how children are regarded within English language teaching proposals for the first cycle of primary school designed by the Chilean Ministry of Education. Thirdly, I will explain the rationale of this study and how the distribution of the chapters will be presented in this work.

#### **1.1 THE CHILEAN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT**

The incorporation of English as a school subject at a younger age has become very popular around the globe (Garton et al. 2011). This gradual trend has impacted the field of ELT in several ways. Firstly, there is a great interest from publishers and materials designers to create and promote books that are attractive for teachers and children. Secondly, governments and parents have put their efforts into developing English language skills also known as English Language Linguistic Capital (Linse, et al. 2014). Parental pressure has created the perception that English language ability is an investment that will permit learners to have access to better job opportunities in the future. As a concrete example of this growing trend, Chile is one of the countries whose government during the past two decades has been also striving to become a bilingual country, where English is seen as a “commodity” (Barahona, 2016). In this sense, this research study presents insights drawn from empirical data on how the common belief of “the younger the better” has impacted difficult contexts where English is taught at primary school, from the perspective of children. This study aims to foreground children’s perceptions and opinions in relation to how learners as young as seven and eight years old could reflect about the way they learn and are taught English in their classrooms in impoverished areas of Santiago, Chile.

Regarding the macro context, this section will discuss how the Chilean school administration has impacted Chilean society. During the past few decades, Chile has experienced a rapid increase in its income. Chilean economic growth illuminated by the neoliberal system has opened the doors of the free-market; facilitating in this sense the incorporation of the country into the current globalised world. Chile has historically been characterized as a profoundly unequal country in terms of income distribution, social protection and benefits provided for persons from

the State. Educational reforms made during the dictatorship also influenced how teaching programmes and initiatives aimed to improve Chilean education became highly oriented towards competitive strategies to enter and compete in the private market. Indeed, the state curricula are mainly designed to prioritize economic principles over learners and teachers' interests and real needs, impacting deeply childhood education. In fact, the great recent interest in strengthening English language teaching in primary school is mainly because children and their education can be transformed into a bigger "*return on investment*" for the state in future policies (Torres and Tabali, 2017). In spite of all of the efforts put into strengthening Chilean education from the government, there is still a salient tendency to support the belief that low academic results from students are highly correlated with their economic background (Bruner, 1997; Matear, 2006; Rojas at al, 2018; Barahona, 2016) highlighting the gap between privileged and underprivileged sectors of the country

In the following section, I will discuss in more detail how English language education has been incorporated in the Chilean curricula and the different changes that have shaped current English policy practiced in the country.

## **1.2 ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN CHILE**

In the Chilean context, since the return of democratic governments (1990) the learning of English has been regarded as a key element to help the development of the country to support and promote the process of globalization. Indeed, the national curriculum clearly states in its guidelines that English has gained an increasing relevance as a medium for accessing different spheres of knowledge (MINEDUC, 2012). As it was mentioned in the section above (1.1), Chile has undergone many changes in its education policies; however, those reforms made in 1996, 2009 and 2012 highly impacted the Chilean educational reality as well as marking the path of how English has been regarded by the State. More specifically, in 1996, English was introduced in primary school as a compulsory school subject for children starting year six to year twelve (Barahona, 2016). Before the implementation of this law (in 1996), English was only introduced as a compulsory school subject at the secondary school level. Therefore, the experience of learning English at school lasted four years, two pedagogical hours a week. As a consequence of this, English language learning had no impact and relevance for Chilean learners. The many modifications of policies for teaching English implemented in the curriculum from 1996 onwards, attempted to gradually introduce English at earlier and earlier stages in primary school. This demonstrated the great interest the government has in supporting the common belief that "English

should be a must”. In 2009, the first government of Michelle Bachelet (2006- 2010) modified the curriculum for English education. Until 2009, the programmes and plans for teaching English mainly focused on skills such as reading and writing. The modifications implemented in 2009, incorporated speaking and listening skills; based on the Comprehensible Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1985) which asserts that the more exposure and opportunities learners are given to use the target language the better the learning will be. In addition to this, assessments and progress maps were firstly presented as a way to assess the performance of learners in English. Three years later, in 2012, the government of Sebastián Piñera focused too on modifying the curriculum for English education. This time, the Chilean Ministry of Education proposed a new model for English instruction underpinned by the widely known: “Communicative Language Approach” (Pachler & Field, 2001; Bingham & Skehan, 2002; Brown, 2007). This new approach in the Chilean curriculum impacted the English teaching and learning: it required teachers to change their practices and prepare lessons that would actively involve students as well as to increment comprehensible input and longer exposure to the target language.

### **1.3 ENGLISH OPEN DOORS PROGRAMME**

As part of the initiatives to help Chile become a bilingual country, in 2004 the Chilean Government created a nation-wide programme called “Inglés Abre Puertas” (EODP: English Open Doors Programme). The main objectives of this programme were to improve the quality of the teaching of English in Chile by broadening the access of English to students, and to make the teaching of English a compulsory subject in schools across the public system.

The programme has implemented a wide variety of reforms that aim to facilitate the access Chileans have to English. Among their many initiatives, EODP has funded a scholarship scheme that allows pre-service teachers to travel abroad and study in an English-speaking country for a semester. Additionally, this programme has offered in-service teachers the opportunities to create networks promoting cooperation and support among teachers of English across the country. As part of the programme, teachers of English are invited to participate in seminars, conferences and workshops aimed to equip them with innovative pedagogic tools, alternative materials, methodologies and language courses to improve English skills proficiency. Interestingly, school students are an important part of this programme too. The Ministry of Education through the EODP organises different activities such as spelling bees, public speaking and debate competitions between schools in each region of the country. The objective of organising these activities is to promote the learning and use of English from a young age. A study conducted by Glass (2013),

suggests that teachers of English have positive comments in respect to the impact that EODP has had in their students' professional lives.

## **1.4 PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN CHILE**

The primary school curriculum of Chile consists of eleven compulsory school subjects: language and communication, indigenous language (compulsory in schools with a high density of indigenous students), foreign languages (compulsory in the second phase of primary education), mathematics, natural sciences, history, geography and social sciences, technology, art, physical education, orientation and religion (must be offered by the school but is optional for students) (British Council, 2015, p. 17).

In the Chilean system of education, primary education is divided into two cycles:

- 1) The first cycle of primary school corresponds to the first four years of formal education. During this period children are generally aged 6 to 9 years old (year 2 to year 5)
- 2) The second cycle of primary school corresponds to the subsequent four years before secondary school. In this stage, children are aged between 10 to 13 years old.

In the Chilean curriculum, English is a compulsory subject only from Year 6 (children aged 10 years old), which leaves a gap within official governmental guidelines for teaching younger children. In spite of this reality, the government of Sebastián Piñera in 2012, confirmed that English is only a compulsory subject since year 6, but at the same time, encouraged the introduction of teaching English to children entering the first cycle of primary school; textbooks were distributed to teachers and students. One year later, in 2013, the Chilean government launched a curricular proposal (MOE, 2012) to teach English to Young Language Learners (YLLs) attending the first cycle of primary school (children aged six to nine years old) to schools that voluntarily ascribed to teach English to children from year 2 (first grade). These guidelines start by explaining to the reader the importance of learning at a younger age appealing to the advantages behind the idea of *“the younger the better”*. Furthermore, these guidelines put special emphasis on developing all four language skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening). Still, English learning in these guidelines is presented as: “the understanding of words, simple phrases, being able to identify key ideas of a short text; understanding and following instructions; interacting with the language, being able to give personal information and communicating with other people in

English” (Barahona, 2016, p. 13). In addition to this, these guidelines align with the national curricula. Indeed, they pay special attention to the development of communicative competences as well as more appropriate pedagogies for children such as Total Physical Response (TPR) and holistic view of language (language as a whole construct and not as separate isolated parts).

So far, there has been little discussion about teaching English as a foreign language to children aged six to nine years old in Chile. Indeed, in spite of all the efforts made by the government to guide practitioners to teach English at the primary level, public and semi-private schools are neither obliged to teach English to younger learners nor to use the guidelines proposed by the Ministry of Education. This is just a decision that remains open for every school, and, as a result some schools had been teaching English to children below ten years old on their own initiative.

Indeed, the curriculum states that all schools are free to employ their own programmes as long as they acknowledge the minimum educational requirements established by the government. Therefore, the teaching of English to young learners is left free for schools in Chile and there is no state curriculum to follow apart from the guidelines suggested by the government. This situation has led to a big gap in the appropriateness of the teaching of English that is currently given to primary school learners in the Chilean educational reality. Consequently, primary school teachers try to survive by their own means.

In addition to the lack of state curricula to teach English to children, many other challenges accompany the teaching of young children in Chile. Teachers in Chile are not trained and prepared to work with children since universities predominantly prepare future pre-service teachers to become secondary school teachers. At the same time, many teachers teaching English at primary level are not proficient in the target language, where in realities like Chile, English is taught mainly through Spanish.

Due to the lack of resources and research studies to inform the teaching of English, pedagogic materials are not always appropriate for the age together with the limited English proficiency of the children. In underprivileged contexts (where the participants of this study come from) teaching and learning English is also undermined by the lack of support children can have at home in relation to schoolwork. In fact, parents and caregivers cannot provide much support with homework due to their own low educational level. Although the use of Internet, electronic resources, satellite and streaming television have helped to bring English closer to the lives of people in Chile, there is scarce access of these new tools in the reality of underprivileged contexts. Indeed, for low- income families, it is not really an option to pay for cable TV or Wi-Fi at home. Therefore, the possibilities to be familiar with information presented in English still remains a

constraint and disadvantage for poorer Chilean learners.

As it was mentioned earlier in this chapter, in EFL contexts like Chile, English is often taught within the context of formal schooling. Under the light of this reality the hours of exposure to English are often insufficient, reducing the time children are exposed to English through interaction. Instead, children receive two pedagogical hours of English lessons once a week. As Garton et. al (2011) reported, limited opportunities to experience English is shared and faced in many contexts across the globe like Chile where constraints with language exposure coexist with other difficulties such as the lack of resources, lack of proper teacher training, large classrooms, and limited possibilities to learn and practice English outside the school context. Furthermore, Legutke (2009) and Garton et. al (2011) discuss that another limitation that EFL contexts face which is, given the time it takes to learn a new language, very slow progress is made over the years because of the little exposure to the target language plus the lack of adequate programmes. This sentiment links directly with my study since I aimed to encourage children to reflect about their own language learning strategies, their personal choices of learning and we explicitly talked about the use of English language strategies (see methodology chapter, section 3.8, p. 82).

Cameron (2013) discusses the tendency for relying on the use of oral skills as the predominant skill employed to design activities for teaching children English. This recommendation, however, represents a major constraint in the EFL classroom, where, as I have mentioned before, it is quite difficult to work on games such acting out dialogues, role-plays or even doing oral presentations, due to time and class size constraints. It is important to regard that different from other European countries, in Chile, there is no official curriculum for teaching English to children in the first four years of primary schools, therefore, there is a great gap between policy intentions and actual classrooms practice because in general, little is known about ways to teach English to children.

#### **1.4.1 Vignette of a typical English lesson in a Chilean primary school (in a deprived area)**

Before describing a typical English lesson in Chile, it is important to clarify that not all schools teach English during the first four years of primary school. However, where English is included, it is part of the school curriculum and it is taught as a formal subject to children in the first four grades of elementary school. Commonly, in primary schools the headroom teacher will teach all subjects to children (maths, science, Spanish language and history). Meanwhile in some other schools, the same primary school teacher will teach English or a specialised teacher of English would come to only teach English to children for forty five minutes and then leave the classroom.



Typically, students' chairs and desks are organized into four rows. Each class would have about 40-45 children and the homeroom teacher's desk is usually at the front of the classroom. All seats are facing towards the whiteboard behind the teacher's desk. Some schools have projectors and some of them have speakers but teachers often have to take their own laptops or speakers because these cannot be relied on. Discipline and silence are highly valued in Chile, the stiller and quieter the children are, the better. English lessons at school would be mainly devoted to teaching vocabulary items often grouped into themes such as: colours, numbers, classroom objects (school items), parts of the classroom, food, among others. Speaking activities at this level will be mainly related to teaching children a song, a poem or a rhyme. At the same time, drilling is widely used since it aims to make students repeat the words the teacher is presenting. More elaborate teaching materials are often a challenge, due to the many constraints that schools face, especially in impoverished areas where teachers do not have access to flashcards or audio materials from textbooks. In addition to this, time constraints would impede teachers to create a wide variety of learning materials and there is a general lack of EYL resources. The whiteboard is the main medium of instruction (regular whiteboard, not interactive whiteboards) where the teacher writes words for children to copy on their notebooks. In primary school, many teachers would use Spanish to teach English and the instructions for classwork will be often given in the mother tongue.

A regular English lesson will start by asking children to pick up their notebooks and be quiet so the teacher can give instructions. At the beginning of the lesson the teacher may ask questions as part of a "routine" such as: How are you today? What's the weather like today? What day is today? What is your favourite colour? Or the teacher will greet students in Spanish and give the instructions for the activity. It is often the case that because children might be slow to write, teachers often cover only one or two activities in each period (which can be from 30 minutes up to an hour). These activities are often based on colouring, connecting dots, writing or copying. If no textbook is available, children will work on handouts the teacher prepared in advance or the whiteboard will be used for children coming out to write words or complete task. If children have a textbook, the teacher will go page by page asking children to do the activities of the book. It is important to mention that in both cases (with or without textbooks) children will be still encouraged to write in their notebooks, especially words or sets of vocabulary. The teacher will give the instruction of the activity and then do administrative work such as filling in the class register, checking the contents of the classroom and signing off the attendance sheet. Then, the teacher would go around the classroom checking if students have been working paying attention mainly to discipline issues. After children have done their work the teacher will go around the classroom and give a stamp or a mark on students' copybook. These copybooks will be marked at

the end of the semester where children have to show that they have written everything and have stamps showing their work done. Copybooks are important since parents are expected to check if children have been working at school. After the teacher has stamped all copybooks children are asked to close their copybooks and go to recess time. For a typical child, the lesson becomes monotonous and very predictable, where English lessons and the teaching methodologies are not really different from other subjects, in which children basically sit down, listen to the teacher and do as told, leaving aside no genuine space for spontaneity and child-initiated play.

## **1.5 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

This ethnographic study attempts to answer questions relating to how children learn and are taught English according to their own voices. This has been widely ignored by educators, material designers and stakeholders. In order to address this gap in the literature this study attempts to answer the following research question and sub-questions:

- 1) How do children reflect about their own English language learning?
  - 1.1) What are their comments, opinions, reactions and perceptions about learning English in general?
  - 1.2) How could young children be encouraged to reflect on their own English language learning processes in relation to working with specific interactive gap tasks?

The research question and sub-questions presented above are aimed at discovering how children make sense of how English language learning at school feels for them. The rationale behind these research questions is mainly due to the fact that there are no concrete efforts from the Chilean government or publishers to understand the realities of primary English from the point of view of children. In addition to this, listening to what primary school children have to say about EFL and the importance that English has for them, even at this young age has always been neglected. Moreover, the teaching of English to children attending the first cycle of primary education has not yet been officially implemented in classrooms in terms of teachers and students; there are still no governmental curricula, and schools are still using the guidelines offered in 2013 up to now. Because of the lack of standardized guidelines for primary school Chilean often, teachers are forced to look for extra resources on the Internet or course-books bought from private publishers such as Cambridge, Oxford or Pearson predominantly, but these materials are culturally bound to

English speaking countries and are not really suitable for the Chilean context or the low English proficiency level of learners. Thus, teachers are at loss as to what to teach and how to teach their EFL classes.

There are very few empirical studies targeting issues related to English language education in Chile. Interestingly, from 2011 onwards, master and doctorate theses conducted and written by Chilean teachers funded by the government, helped to start building a research community aimed at disseminating research studies conducted in Chile. This interest in researching from Chilean teachers teaching English was also strongly drawn from personal experiences, pedagogical needs. In striving to improve Chilean education, teachers were seeking alternative methodologies and in this sense build theory and practice that can inform appropriate pedagogies to teach English according to our own Chilean context (Aliaga, et.al 2015). In spite of this great initiative, the majority of these studies have focussed on secondary/tertiary education and still very few are dedicated to primary education.

Particularly in the field of ELT, few studies have been conducted in relation to primary school teaching. Among these studies the following are notable: Tabali (2012); Inostroza (2013); Quitel, et.al (2014); Inostroza (2015); Barahona (2016) and González and Toledo (2016). These research studies have attempted to depict Chilean classrooms and address issues not only by suggesting changes in teaching English methodology, but by offering empirical evidence of what is going on inside classrooms. The importance of building an understanding of how children are learning English in their own words could help to strengthen primary English teaching education in Chile in the near future. The specific aim of the present research project emerged from a necessity to fill in a gap in the literature in terms of how children could be encouraged to reflect about their own English learning processes, not only in the Chilean context, but also more broadly in the field of Applied Linguistics. After examining the literature related to children as language learners, metacognition and reflection, I realized that little has been written about how to elicit metacognitive processes, such as how children can reflect about their own English language learning (see Chapter Two). Similarly, most of the studies identified in the literature have been conducted in ESL contexts, but little has been done with young learners learning English in EFL contexts as Chile. This research project seeks to investigate how asking the opinions of children, regarding how they learn English in order to contribute to future developments of teaching English to children in Chilean primary schools.

Children in EFL contexts like Chile do not have many chances to speak English outside lessons at school, and they often feel demotivated to learn a foreign language, since they do not see the immediate use of it (Nikolov, 1999). In impoverished areas this gap becomes even wider,

because the real possibilities of using English to travel or to speak with an English-speaking foreigner is a far-fetched goal. Therefore, teaching English in these contexts can be seen by children and by their parents, as a waste of time and money. It is hard not to agree with this perception, since learning English is not a tool that will be essential when living under low-income conditions.

From my own experience, as a former teacher of English in impoverished areas of Santiago, I can say that when teaching in difficult circumstances, the development of reflection can serve as a tool to encourage more positive attitudes towards learning. I strongly believe that children have important things to say about their learning and they are not only empty vessels receiving information coded in books and delivered in lessons. Due to the many injustices working class people receive daily in my country, the main motivations to design and conduct this study are strongly attached to how I as a researcher, identified myself as a Chilean teacher whose desire is to offer something positive to the children. What is more, I believe that children's voices need to be represented and taken seriously in empirical research (Pinter, 2013). It is important to emphasize in this introduction chapter that the education of minority groups in Chile needs to be given more profound and serious attention instead of ignoring their needs and demands. Additionally, I strongly believe that education should strive for quality access to every single group of society, regardless of their income and social position. In order to break this barrier, concrete changes in policy making are urgently needed. In this sense, this investigation would not only contribute to provide empirical findings in relation to how young learners reflect about their own English language learning, but also, it will foreground the voices of children living in low-income neighbourhoods in Santiago. The main purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of the way children reflect about their own English language learning processes engaging in different tasks and activities. This objective would be achieved through the conduction of empirical research in this underexplored field in the Chilean context (and across the globe)

## **1.6 THE STRUCTURE OF THIS THESIS**

This work consists of six chapters. Chapter II will address the background literature underlying this study by discussing issues of children as language learners, their cognitive and social development, metacognition and the area of researching with children. Later, Chapter III describes the methodology and the theoretical framework of this qualitative study. Details on the tasks and how the two phases of, fieldwork (in 2014 and 2015) were prepared and conducted will be addressed in this chapter. Chapter IV provides a description of the data analysis and discusses the

main themes and subthemes that emerged from recorded data gathered with the children. Then, Chapter 5 discusses the main contributions of this study. Lastly, Chapter 6 is framed as a reflective conclusion where I suggest recommendations for researching children methodologies and draw on the importance of this study for EFL in Chilean teaching practice.

## **CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This literature review covers the areas of children learning English, play, metacognition and children's voices, all of which underpin the methodology employed in this research study. The first part of this literature review is devoted to reviewing different definitions to describe young learners and to discussing the main characteristics of children between seven and nine years old as English language learners. The second section of this chapter is dedicated to understanding play, games and fun. The fourth section discusses metacognition and children, addressing issues of metacognitive strategies, development of metacognition and self-regulation. Researching metacognition and researching children are considered in the fifth section.

### **2.2 WHO IS THE YOUNG LANGUAGE LEARNER?**

#### **2.2.1 Introduction**

Due to the ethnographic nature of this study, the children participated in the project for a two-year period. When this research project started in 2014, the girls were between seven and eight years old. In 2015, during the second phase of this study the girls were between eight and nine years old. The following section will discuss how young learners have been defined in the literature, with specific focus on this age group.

#### **2.2.2. Defining the term**

Defining who the younger language learner has been a complex discussion in the field of ELT (Rixon, 1999; Pinter, 2006; Ellis, 2014). The many differences found in the teaching practice of English to children are also influenced, for example, by culturally bound conceptions of childhood. At the same time, educational goals, policies and realities of each country and culture where English is taught around the world vary. These differences have raised tensions in terms of appropriate context pedagogies and the urge to re-define and conceptualize what is meant by "young language learners" in ELT in different contexts. For instance, more specific contextual issues such as the age children start primary school, the age children start learning English at

school, the types of school and educational systems adopted in each country and region may vary according to each context and influences the way children learn English.

Different scholars have attempted to offer a definition for this age group. Early descriptions of children as language learners can be found in Cameron (2001, p.12) where the author states that young learners in foreign language learning contexts are understood as those between “five and twelve years of age”. In addition to this definition, Drew and Hasselgreen (2008; p.1) suggest that young language learners (YLLS) “are defined as learners from five years, up to around 12/ 13 years, which seems to reflect the lower and upper limits of primary school education”. In Chile, children aged twelve and thirteen years old are not part of primary school anymore, as they are part of a preparation stage for secondary school. In this sense, an older definition provided by Rixon (1992, p. 73) serves to explain better how young language learners are understood as a group in Chile. Rixon, employs Stern and Weinrib’s (1977) definition where YLLS are children from six to eleven years’ old who attend primary or elementary school or in the classes where pupils stay in the same school until their early teens” (Rixon, 1992, p 73). This definition represents better what is understood as YLLS in the Chilean educational context, since children often attend the same school until eight grade. Interestingly, more recent discussion in relation to how the term “young language learners” (YLLS) has been defined and employed in ELT contexts has been raised in the literature by Read (2011) and Ellis (2014). These discussions showed the necessity of reflecting about the evidence behind the common belief of stating “the younger children learn English the better”. Certainly, Ellis’s (2014) report has contributed to provide an understanding of YLLS in different contexts. Indeed, according to Ellis (2014) the term YLLS or young learners used in other educational fields from mainstream ELT differ, therefore, it is of great importance to better describe young learners in ELT in relation to each country conceptions of “childhood” in order to develop appropriately informed practice and better pedagogical decisions (Ellis, 2014). For instance, six-year-old children would be quite different in terms of their cognitive and physical development in comparison with older learners who are eleven or fifteen years old. There are differences even between pre-teens and teenagers, which challenge strict categorizations of YLLS.

During the first years of primary education (between 5 and 6 years old) children as language learners are believed to focus more on meaning and tend to see language mainly as chunks or sets of words and vocabulary (Moon, 2000). Since children are still in the process of developing their own first language, they have a more limited range of language learning experiences. They enjoy using their imagination and activities that would involve body movement. According to Scott and Ytreberg (1990; p.3) children learn best if they are playing and enjoying

themselves, therefore pedagogic resources that allow young learners to touch and discover are of great importance when aiming to approach children's interests (Moon, 2000).

## **2.3 CHILDREN LEARNING ENGLISH**

There is limited theoretical and research foundations of teaching English to young learners. This field urgently needs more empirical studies that would inform future pedagogic practices. This research study would contribute to provide valuable data and help to fill this gap in the research for appropriate pedagogies in teaching English to children aged seven to nine years old. This ethnography was implemented in two schools between 2014 and 2015. During that period, I prepared activities to encourage reflection from the children that participated in this study. The objective behind the tasks I designed was to show children different opportunities for them to share their opinions in relation to how they learn and are taught English in Chile. In this sense, this research study could contribute to provide empirical data in respect to how children make sense of their English education.

Looking to the future, this valuable data could help teachers and practitioners to understand the perspective of children as language learners. If children and their voices are considered by institutions and government agencies, research projects like this one may become a valuable resource for shaping primary school curricula by incorporating children's own experiences and ideas about learning English.

### **2.3.1 Characteristics of young language learners**

This section will cover general guidelines about children as language learners. It is important to mention that as Pinter (2006) suggests, children are a diverse group and the degree to which they fit into these characteristics will also depend on environmental issues and the support they receive. In the literature, children are always defined as very dynamic and exhibiting a lot of energy; an essential aspect that needs to be constantly present when shaping an appropriate pedagogy to teach English or to teach children in general. According to Pinter (2006), children are keen to engage with fantasy, creativity and action. At the same time, young learners very much enjoy moving their bodies and doing physical activities such as jumping, singing, playing since they get easily bored. More recent publications, such as Ellis and Ibrahim (2015), have challenged this belief by pointing out that although children can get easily distracted, they can also concentrate and engage in an



activity for a long time if they are interested in what they are doing (Ellis and Ibrahim, 2015; p. 21).

Regarding the work of Bialystok (2001) children's natural tendency is to focus on meaning rather than form. In other words, they are less interested in learning language through explicit grammar. English language pedagogy is strongly oriented to develop vocabulary skills in children involving understanding as well as production and not only meaningless "chunks of language" (Cameron, 2003; p.109). It is important to consider too that textbooks and teaching materials are usually laid out in contextualized sets of vocabulary planned in topics or themes that are appealing for children (Legutke, et. Al, 2009). Interestingly, Read (2010) argues that even at younger ages children can be encouraged to learn grammatical forms introduced in group activities such as games and handcrafts, where teachers are encouraged to try these activities and adapt them if necessary to their own contexts.

In addition to this, McKay, (2008) suggests too that young learners can also focus on forms, and are able to develop more complex vocabulary and language structures if they are given the opportunity to interact through the use of the target language. In EFL contexts, however, children have very few chances to learn English in mainstream classrooms through interaction and use of the language; therefore, more studies are needed in order to reveal what the real possibilities are to incorporate feasible language use in English lessons at school.

If children learn more effectively from interacting with concrete objects, it is necessary to incorporate concrete materials into teaching such as realia, visual aids such as flashcards, pictures and drawings. Pedagogic resources that allow young learners to touch and discover are of great importance when aiming to develop an appropriate pedagogy for children's learning (children can even bring their toys, stuffed animals or even pets to the classroom) by practitioners. Similarly, relevant adults around the children could also help to construct a learning English environment, since this is not the reality of EFL contexts like in Chile, where English at the primary level is just an isolated school subject taught for two pedagogical hours a week. Moreover, under the light of this reality, it is also necessary to encourage educators in EFL contexts to provide as much opportunities for language use, exposure and comprehensible input as possible. However, this represents a major challenge for teachers at primary schools in EFL contexts such in Chile, where many challenges and constraints are faced daily when attempting to put this into practice.

## 2.4 MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

Having provided a definition of how young language learners are understood in the field of ELT in section (2.2) above, this section will discuss ‘middle childhood’ in contexts beyond ELT. According to Douglas (2011), middle childhood can be understood as the stage in human development that comes after early childhood. It includes children aged between six and eleven or twelve years old. This section attempts to explore the main developmental features in children between seven and nine years old, specifically with a focus on developmental changes experienced by children aged between six and eight years old, which would be considered as an “early stage” of middle childhood. This decision has been made with the purpose of drawing more attention to the specific age range scope of this study providing a general developmental psychological framework to the study. Whilst, early childhood sets the grounds for the future development of children “middle childhood is a pathway to adolescence, setting trajectories that are not easily changed later” (Huston, et.al. 2006, p. 2). Children’s brains are constantly undergoing changes aimed at refining the wide variety of abilities developed and acquired during early childhood, the success or failure of developing these skills will be intertwined with the social environment surrounding the child (Mah and Ford-Jones, 2012). According to Blume (2014), children aged between six and nine are developing their cognitive skills and could become equipped with more complex cognitive abilities that allow them to engage in higher intellectual problem-solving activities, as well as being more aware and understanding reciprocal social relationships. In addition to this, self-regulation skills, abstract thinking, more flexibility to perform tasks will be expected that children start building up during primary school. It is also important to mention the positive impact of building bonds with peers and classmates while doing activities. More importantly, as part of their development, these skills are expected to be developed throughout, between the ages of seven to nine. Furthermore, between the ages of six to nine children experience a shift from being ‘highly egocentric’, seeing themselves as the centre of the world as they were in early childhood. Indeed, they realize that the world is a vast space in which they have a place somewhere. Therefore, they experience a shift towards the realization of the same world as a more complex construction in which people can have different opinions, reactions and perceptions of a certain issue or problem (Douglas, 2011).

It is important to mention that many theorists such as Piaget and Freud saw in middle childhood a path to the consolidation of the rapid achievements children have gained during early childhood and at the same time it is the period in which children prepare for the changes they will experience during the turbulence of adolescence (Eccles, J. 1999). During middle childhood children experience different changes in relation to their cognitive development. According to Douglas (2011), children start developing a more accurate idea of reality. Moreover, children progressively begin to leave behind magical thinking and become less self-centred in their thinking. They become more aware of the differences between subjective and objective reality. In terms of their logical reasoning skills, children can understand better the relationship between cause and effect. At age six, generally, many children in the world start formal schooling, which represents a major change in the life of children. In the following section (2.4.1) issues related to entering school will be discussed.

#### **2.4.1 Entering School**

In many western cultures children begin primary school at the age of six. In Chile, all children who are six years old must be enrolled in a primary school since it is compulsory. For many children across the world, starting primary school is part of the life people often remember. Indeed, according to Douglas, (2011), this great event represents a significant change in the life of a child. First of all, from this moment on, the school-age child will have to deal with new experiences, routines and expectations not established before in preschool. In other words, in this new phase, children face a more structured environment from the one presented up to this point. Therefore, elementary school requires children's adaptation to new school routines and learning activities, which challenges their developing cognitive and physical skills. Children start spending a greater part of their lives at school and therefore begin to become more independent from parental guidance and are required to develop self-regulation (control of their own behaviour) in school situations. In addition to this, this new environment establishes new rules and routines. Indeed, the school and the classroom have their own rules that demand from children to adjust to terms of "good behaviour" (Eccles, 1999).

At the same time, children need to readjust to new rules and authority imposed such as their teachers or other adults in school who are different from their parents (Huston, A. et, al. 2006). Because of the control and structure given by formal school, especially in the Chilean educational context, which is characterized by large classes and challenging contexts. These constraints make Chilean education a strict rule-based process. In spite of the constraints presented in this reality, this new school environment also provides opportunities for children to learn new skills. In addition to this, primary school education scaffolds young learners' curiosity and their willingness to learn new things, as well as providing opportunities for children to demonstrate their achievements and new skills (Eccles, 1999). Although children are undertaking an intensive process of becoming progressively more autonomous during primary school children starting school at the age of six and seven are still highly dependent on the care and support provided by their parents or carers. Indeed, in order to successfully adapt to the context of school, children will be required to use their previous knowledge and their ability to internalise new ideas, experiences or knowledge to solve the problems they will be facing during the course of formal schooling.

#### **2.4.2 Social Development**

Social development for children at this stage becomes crucial, since their social sphere expands dramatically (Hudson and Ripke, 2006). The context of school asks the child to progressively move from being socially isolated at home, for example, to learning how to become a social partner and interact with a greater number of peers and adults (Goswami, 2002). Moreover, in school, children need to interact with different people and even though family is still the core of their emotional support, parents and children start to spend less time in activities together. For these reasons, the opinions and the acceptance of other people begin to be regarded as important too. Indeed, interaction with peers, making friends and getting to know other adults outside family represents critical developmental tasks for the child. The social skills children need to acquire at this stage are directly linked to the cognitive changes they are undergoing. According to Douglas (2007), children in middle childhood show great interest and motivation towards the acceptance of peers, which sets the foundations for maintaining friendships. Through this interaction, children learn how to establish and follow norms; they learn how to respect hierarchies and social status.

Elements such as play, games and fun gained great relevance for this study due to the ludic nature of the research methods employed with the children. In the following section, I will attempt

to provide an understanding of the importance of play in children's cognitive and social development from theory and the implications of incorporating games as a tool for learning.

## **2.5 UNDERSTANDING PLAY, GAMES AND FUN**

### **2.5.1 Introduction**

According to Cook (1997; p. 227), “play is major component of human life, and needs explanation by anyone who seeks to understand it”. Through history, there have been multiple attempts to understand the role of play in human development. Common characteristics of play discussed in the theory is often related to enjoyment, relaxation with rules, meanings and relationships that are different from it in the society around it” (Cook, 1997; p. 227).

In the following sections, I will discuss play by attempting to provide a theoretical understanding. In order to do so, I will open this section by discussing the work of Piaget and how play was regarded within his cognitive development theory. Secondly, the discussion will be devoted to Vygotsky and his views on play from a socio constructivist theory perspective. Lastly, the six characteristics of play proposed by Caillois will be briefly reviewed. Caillois, was a French sociologist and philosopher who made a thorough critique on the work on play previously done by Huizinga (1938) and the strong component of competition he attributed to play. Caillois concluded that “play” was a difficult term to define and instead he provided an account of six different features that characterized play.

### **2.5.2 Theoretical framework of play**

Traditional educational conceptions of play saw it as a waste of time or as a human necessity to release extra energy or as “*a drain for superfluous energy*” (Piaget, 1951; p. 151). During the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, a cognitive theorist called Jean Piaget and his work on human cognitive-developmental theory contributed greatly to the contemporary understanding of child development. This section will focus on the relevance of the work done by Piaget in relation to play within the age group of the participants of this study: children aged seven to nine years old; that is to say between the preoperational (2 to 7 years) and the concrete operational period (7 to 11 years) according to Piaget's stages of cognitive development (Berk, 2003, p. 20).

In 1951, Piaget published his work related to play, dreams and imitation in children. He opens the discussion on play by pondering on the difficulty of defining the term due to the intrinsic

complexity, extent and the use of the word. Piaget defined play under six criteria. First of all, he begins by distinguishing play from other activities in human life, for Piaget play “is an end in itself” since other non-ludic activities such as work are not contained in the activities as such (Piaget, 1951; p. 147). The second criterion is the spontaneity of play, a characteristic that contrasts to the constraints of work and real adaptation. For Piaget, it was necessary to distinguish between controlled and uncontrolled spontaneity in which the former is restricted by society or reality, meanwhile the latter was regarded as real spontaneity because it is not controlled. The third criterion is related to pleasure when regarding play as an activity that can be done just for the enjoyment that it brings and no product or result more than amusement can be expected from playing, different from reality or adult life expectations. The fourth criterion is the lack of organization in play in contrast to serious thought, which seems to be always structured and ordered. The fifth criterion is related to the particularity of play as being free from conflicts. According to Piaget, in play the ego seeks to be revenged, and therefore, it is only in play where the child experiences a real sense of individual liberty and has the opportunity to escape from the obligations children have in real life; where their only possible solutions are either disobedience, submission or cooperating, all of them involving some level of compromise (Piaget, 1951; p. 150). Lastly, the sixth criterion is overmotivation, which refers to incentives added after a particular activity has begun to take place. Consequently, additional incentives become a particularity of play.

Although both Piaget and Vygotsky understood children as active learners, they differ in how they positioned children in how they relate with the world. Piaget placed the child alone interacting with a world of objects; meanwhile Vygotsky saw the development of children as the interaction between the child and the world surrounded by different people (Berk, 2013; Cameron, 2001). In order to address these differences, I will devote the next paragraphs to provide a brief discussion of the work of Vygotsky, specifically on the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978) and its relevance in understanding play. For Vygotsky, imaginary play can help the child to develop new ways of thinking. Through play and actions, the imagination of children can grow and therefore play must be nurtured. According to Vygotsky (1962), social interactions between children and relevant adults like parents, teachers or peers, would enable the child to internalize certain values, rules and skills that are essential to effectively function in society. Moreover, those interactions would catalyse the increasing development of complex and higher-order thinking abilities such as analysis, evaluation, critical thinking and synthesis (Doherty and Hughes, 2009). Under the light of the Vygotskian theory, adults play a fundamental role in guiding and supporting children in their development, especially in language development (Gordon, 2007,

Doherty and Hughes, 2009). Therefore, the development of children is highly linked to instruction where the role of the adults surrounding the child gains great relevance.

In this sense, Vygotsky described the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978) as the type of support that can be obtained from older relevant people around the child (Linse, 2005). In other words, ZPD refers to the gap between the existing knowledge children have and the potential knowledge they would be likely to achieve with the help of a more knowledgeable adult (Cameron, 2001). Later, Bruner (1983) coined the term scaffolding; understood as the help, assistance or support children can obtain from relevant adults close to them. According to Bruner, scaffolding occurs in the adult- child interaction within the child's own ZPD (Linse, 2005; p. 2005). Thus, pertinent support from older people within children's close trust circle will enable the internalization of important information when encountering future problems. ZPD and play are highly connected; in fact, for Vygotsky "play creates a zone of proximal development for the child. In play a child always behaves beyond his average age above his daily behaviour; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself" (Vygotsky, 1978; p. 102).

Vygotsky understood play as if being put under a magnifying glass, it could be observed that play actually contains "all developmental tendencies in a condensed form and is itself a major source of development" (Vygotsky, 1978; p. 102). In addition to this, he asserted, "a child's greatest achievements are possible in play" (1987, p.100). According to Holzman, (2009; p. 50) the unique characteristic of freedom found in play is the creation of an imaginary situation in which meaning dominates action. Vygotsky recognised two particular characteristics of play such as being in an imaginary situation containing rules. For him, play- development relationship could be compared with instruction-development relationship clearly unveiling his beliefs on the potentiality of using play as tool for learning. In spite of the power given to play in Vygotsky (1978), he questions the common belief that play is an activity that brings pleasure as a product of performing it. Play is always associated with enjoyment, desire and pleasure. Different from Vygotsky, Caillois linked play with the pleasure and fascination children experience from it, perhaps deeply bound to the spontaneous and unconscious involvement. In his own words: "there is also no doubt that play must be defined as a free and voluntary activity, a source of joy and amusement" (Caillois, 1961; p. 6). Therefore, play will happen only when the players have the desire to do so, without this component play will be nothing different from normal activities besides play.

Caillois developed a classification of play (1961) in which he asserts that play is formed by six different characteristics. Play is free and not obligatory, otherwise it will lose its quality of being a joyous activity. Play is separate, in terms of having its own rules, time- space previously

arranged. Play is uncertain and the result of the course of the game cannot be known in advance. Play is unproductive, there is no profit gathered after or as a product of playing. Play is governed by its own rules, which are completely different from the laws of society or serious life. Play is make-believe as it creates alternative realities that contrast with real life (Caillois, 1962; p. 9-10).

After providing three sets of characterisations of play, in the following section games, fun and their implications for language learning will be discussed.

### **2.5.3 Games and fun**

In order to introduce this section, I would briefly discuss the work of Bruner (1983) drawing from the work of Wittgenstein (1953) and his reflections on the word game. He defined games as “idealized in society and have a closely circumscribed format” (Bruner, 1983; p. 46). Bruner called games “*idealized*” because of the particularities of games; they have a clear goal, they are very well structured with a sequence that is underpinned by the rules of the games, regarding them as being completely “*conventional and non-natural*” (p.43), since games need planning, agreements and certain clear rules to be followed.

Games have been widely recommended as an effective pedagogical resource for enhancing learning, especially with children due to their natural tendency to play and create games. According to Brewster, et. al (1991; p. 174) “children really enjoy games and music”. In spite of this common assumption, it is important to mention that there is an easy inclination to trivialize the positive qualities of playing games and their potential use in English language lessons. Indeed, Rixon (1991) interestingly challenges the role of fun and games in language education. According to the author, although children enjoy working with games in the classroom, it is important to have clear guidelines and learning objectives for playing games, otherwise play can become “a waste of the limited time usually available for language learning” (Rixon, 1991; p.33) as it is the case in EFL contexts like Chile. As Mourão (2014) strongly asserts, “playing should be taken seriously”, according to the author language learning games and activities should be challenging, well planned and allow space for children to initiate play. It is important to consider avoiding activities that have no linguistic challenge or are just used for keeping children quiet and still. This is also the case of Chile, where a good class is only the one with no noise, where children are not moving and they copying what is written on the board.

In primary school teaching, games and fun play a fundamental role in engaging children’s motivation and attitudes towards learning English. Using games in the classroom can help children to enhance cooperation, healthy competition and learn how to lose (Carless, 2002). Stimulating



play environments could also help children to improve their verbal communication and social skills. When playing games young learners can make good use of their creativity and imagination (Kalliala, 2006; Wood and Attfield, 2005)

Since play, games and fun are often related to the issue of motivating children, in the following section issues underlying children's motivation to learn English will be discussed.

## 2.6 MOTIVATION FOR YOUNG LEARNERS TO LEARN ENGLISH

In spite of the extensive literature and research study conducted on motivation, most of the theory is focused on discovering how adult learners can be motivated or what are the underlying reasons and aspects of learning English that would motivate a person to learn a foreign or a second language. However, very little research has been conducted in the area of investigating what motivates children to learn English. According to Li et al (2018), there is limited knowledge and understanding regarding what motivates children to learn English and the progression of their motivation to learn English throughout their time in school and sustainability (from primary to secondary school). In addition to this, it is also important to mention that motivation is, at the same time, not only a cognitive activity but is also a social and culturally bound construct. In EFL contexts, like Chile the role of motivation for English language learners can be affected by the lack of urgent necessity to speak the target language and especially in low-income contexts the learning of English seems pointless for children (or their parents) because they do not see an immediate benefit of investing in materials and time to learn. Nikolov (1999) reported the results of an exploratory study conducted with children aged from 6 to 14 years old. In this study, children were asked their reasons for learning English. The youngest group (6 to 8 years old) provided the following reasons for learning English: classroom related answers a) *because it is so fun* b) *because I like it* c) *because it is easy, I'm very good at it, it's easy to get a reward*. Children also saw the teacher as a major source of motivation. Their responses included ideas such as a) *because the teacher is nice and kind* b) *because the teacher has long hair, because the teacher is short* c) *because the teacher loves me* (Nikolov, 1999; p. 42). Another source of motivation was related to the influence of family and other external factors as evidenced in these responses: a) *I am teaching my mother/ brother/sister/cousin* b) *because my brother/sister/cousin is learning English too*. Answers from the second group of children aged between 8 to 11 years old, their classroom experiences were similar to the previous group: a) *because the classes are good, interesting* b) *not boring* c) *because we only play and listen to stories* d) *we can do what we like*. In relation to the teacher they said: a) *she does not shout* b) *she is kind and nice* (Nikolov, 1999; p. 43). It is important

to mention that in this age group children provided more external reasons than the younger groups. Older children offered the following reasons: a) *because I got signed up* b) *I am teaching my mother*. Lastly utilitarian reasons included a) *so I will be able to talk* b) *it will be useful* c) *when we travel abroad it will be good* (where children were thinking about their future and the implications of English learning in their lives. Overall, the attitudes of children were in general positive towards the learning of English and demonstrated emotional attachment towards their teacher. More recent studies have been conducted in order to discover young learners and their motivation to learn English such as Wu (2003) who carried out a research study with Chinese children. He conducted a longitudinal study; this research was based on discovering the effect of classroom environment in young learners' intrinsic motivation. The results of this study revealed that creating a supportive learning environment that positively impacts students' learning did have an effect in stimulating intrinsic motivation to learn English from a younger age. Carreira (2006; 2012) conducted different studies on children's sustained motivation when learning English in Japan. Carreira (2006) applied questionnaires to young learners from first to six graders in China. Students were asked about their intrinsic, extrinsic, instrumental motivation and issues related to anxiety when learning English. The findings of this study revealed that third grade students showed more motivation to learn English than sixth graders. The results of the questionnaire demonstrated that a decrease of motivation to learn English was experienced, as students grew older. Later, Carreira (2012) conducted a study on young learners and their motivations to learn English with older learners (10 to 12 years old). The questionnaires included questions on the areas of motivational orientations for learning EFL such Identified-and-introjected regulation, intrinsic motivation and external regulation and basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, relatedness). Both studies (Carreira, 2006; 2012) concluded that questionnaires only provided limited information, which could be deepened by the use of interviews and more qualitative methods as well as the importance of replicating studies like these ones in other contexts in order to see if contextual issues influenced the loss of young learners' motivation to learn English besides the age factor.

### **2.6.1 Peer interaction and children**

Most of the activities conducted with the children in this study involved group or pair activities. Pair activities in phase one were employed to lower the anxiety of children, since they were not familiar with the researcher at the beginning; therefore, working with a friend was less threatening than working with the researcher. The same procedure was followed during phase two where children worked the same partner in the information gap activities. During middle childhood children learn to be friends and value friendship, which is why working with classmates or friends was of great relevance for this research study. It is worth mentioning that most of the research about peer interaction and young learners has been conducted in the field of second language acquisition (Gordon, 2007) where English is learnt as a second language and is also the main medium of communication in school. Even though, this is not the context of the research project presented in this work (which context is in Chilean classrooms), general guidelines of peer interaction in this section will be considered. Different from the EFL reality, in ESL contexts peers and other children actually, present opportunities for children to engage in the social context where language is practiced and acquired.

Indeed, for children while out of school contexts, social and participatory skills with other children or with proficient users of the target language would benefit them to reach English linguistic goals. In ESL contexts, this exchange of ideas while socializing does affect the language spoken by young learners, which will be expressed in the way they use their language and other non-linguistic resources to convey their ideas, such as mimicry, negotiation emerging during children's plays and use of formulaic sentences. According to developmental researchers (e.g. Hartup, 1996), peers for children are more than people who will contribute to the development of their language. Friends provide a context for development such as school and/or family would do for the child. Therefore, peer interaction would influence the development of children as much as parents or teachers do during the life of a child. Essentially, peers offer the context for language socialization where young learners receive language input and models for participating among other children (Philip and Duchesne, 2008).

### **2.6.2 Tasks and children**

It is important to mention that this study does not focus on task-based learning and teaching, but tasks played an important role in this research, since different types of tasks and activities were employed to elicit the ways the children could reflect about their learning. This helped them to think in concrete terms about the way they learned English. Research in the past has failed to foster the opinions of young children by employing experimental approaches, often using methods that are not specifically appropriate for investigating young learners (Elshout-Mohr, et al. 1999; Perry et al. 2002).

Repetitive tasks have been chosen due to the multiple benefits they offer to learners. First of all, Bygate (2001) states that the repetition of the same tasks would enable the information gained to be stored in the long-term memory, and therefore students can relate this info with the one needed for a new performance of the same task. In addition to that, repetition provides a more structured context for learning, thus creating a more suitable environment for forming relations. According to Bygate (2001), there are two ways of working with task repetition (and may affect performance). In the first one, the same exact task is to be carried out on subsequent occasions, meanwhile on the second type, learners work on a version of the same task, and this will help them to deal with new versions of the same task. In a previous study, Bygate (1996) conducted a short study with one student who watched a cartoon two times. Each time was separated by three days. The student has to re-tell the story. The purpose of the exercise was to seek if task repetition can help children to improve their performance of the task, improve aspects of language use and accuracy; and metacognitive strategies such as planning and monitoring.

Furthermore, according to Pinter (2007) by allowing learners to perform a task several times it helps them to move their attention into the production of more complex grammar and more adequate vocabulary. Moreover, the author states that by repeating a task, young learners may organize, optimize and select their language resources more efficiently.

### **2.6.3 Characteristics of tasks and children**

Tasks by their very own nature are characterized by different factors, which would be very beneficial for teaching children, since they fit with their natural way of learning. Firstly, some tasks take into account limited foreign language skills learners have. In contexts like Chile, for example, young children are just starting to learn English; therefore, they have very basic knowledge of English vocabulary. Moreover, tasks encourage learners to do cognitively challenging tasks. In addition to this, tasks must foster spontaneous interaction, playfulness and the creativity of children, which is connected to the idea of how children learn, since children need to be actively involved when learning, in order to make the most of the activities. Learners are encouraged to take risks and to experiment with the target language in an environment in which mistakes are allowed. Lastly, tasks promote the autonomy of learners in the sense that they are allowed to be responsible and to choose between different tasks the teacher prepares (Legutke, et.al 2009). It is important to mention that the development of children is not only at a cognitive and physical level, but other factors surrounding the life of the child such as the support given by family, economic status will interfere in how the capacities of children would develop. Moreover, certain personality traits or learning styles highly valued or undervalued by specific contexts would also determine how the child would expand their potential in different social settings (Charlesworth, 2007).

The following sections will be devoted to provide a theoretical framework underlying one of the main aims of this study stated in research question n°1, pondering if children as young as seven, eight and nine years old could be encouraged to reflect about their own learning through tasks that would intentionally attempt to draw on metacognitive and reflection skills. The development and importance of metacognition as a mental process relevant for learning successfully has been widely discussed in the literature based on the work of Flavell (1978).

## 2.7 METACOGNITIVE CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN IN SCHOOL CONTEXTS

### 2.7.1 Defining Metacognition

The importance of the role of metacognition in learning, has been present through history, as the art of questioning, such as the Socratic method (in ancient Greek) through more contemporary theories of learning as John Dewey, (the father of progressive education), who reformulated the role of experience in learning, since he stated that humans can benefit more from reflecting about their experience rather than learning from living experiences themselves (Dewey, 1933; Tanner, 2012). However, coining the term “metacognition” for the processes of learning and thinking about our own learning, happened only during the second part of the seventies. In 1976, John Flavell (the father of developmental psychology) coined the term “metacognition”. According to John Flavell (1978), metacognition can be regarded as “one’s knowledge concerning one’s own cognitive processes or anything related to them”.

Flavell (1979) understands metacognition as the awareness individuals have about their own cognitive processes and strategies in order to accomplish a certain task. In this sense, metacognition comes to help accomplishing this goal. In its simplest definition metacognition can be defined as “*thinking about one’s learning*”. Furthermore, the core features of metacognition are: *self-regulation*: managing how we go about learning and *reflection*: thinking about what we know (Darling-Hammond et. al, 2003). Later in his theory, Flavell proposes a categorization and develops three types of metacognitive such as: declarative knowledge: “person knowledge” which refers to the understanding of own capacities; procedural knowledge: “task knowledge”, understood as how much learners know about a certain task and what challenges they face when working on it; and strategy knowledge: “conditional knowledge”, in relation to the use and knowledge learners have about learning strategies as well as transferring this knowledge to other types of situations children in their lives.

### **2.7.2. Metacognition and Children**

Flavell (1979) regards the development of metacognition as one of the core elements related to the development of cognition in early childhood education (Robson, 2010). Most of the research studies related to metacognition have been conducted with adults or adolescents, and little has been dedicated to the metacognitive development of younger children. The bridge between the importance of metacognition in learning and its relationship with the context of language classroom is of great relevance for this study since it is important to think about how reflective demands from lessons and tasks could facilitate the integration of metacognition into the aims of daily teaching practices. Reflecting and thinking about our own learning must be a process done consciously not only after doing activities, but also while carrying them out (Larkin, 2010)

Furthermore, there is a strong dominant belief that young children (especially in early childhood) are not able to develop metacognitive knowledge up to the age of eight (Veenman, et. al 2006). Therefore, it was not possible for teachers to instruct their learners into the use of metacognitive strategies. These beliefs come from previous studies, which indicated that when performing certain tasks, children failed in understanding them or following instructions (Flavell et al. 1970; Markman, 1977). However, metacognition has been proven to influence other areas in children such as: oral communication of information, oral persuasion, oral comprehension, reading comprehension, writing, language acquisition, attention, memory, problem solving, social cognition, self-control and self-instruction (Flavell, 1979, p. 1). Moreover, studies, such as Whitebread (2007) found evidence of self-regulation and metacognition at earlier ages than eight, in a two-year longitudinal study conducted with children aged three to five years old. The study conducted by Whitebread aimed to discover whether metacognitive abilities in children would develop earlier if using more adequate and appealing methods for researching children. The results reported in this study provide significant evidence with regard to children and their use of metacognitive strategies. Firstly, it was shown that in natural social contexts that are meaningful for children, metacognitive behaviours were indeed observed, such as self-correction, peer-correction, monitoring of their learning. Secondly, in child-initiated activities such as choosing to give a different use to the flashcards children were able to suggest alternative activities that they created and even bring to the project activities they made with their parents at home. These reactions from children provided additional evidence for the development of metacognition, which at the same time seemed to be reduced by adult-intervention. Other studies, such as DeLoache, et. al (1985), have demonstrated that at the age of three and four, children were able to monitor their problem-solving behaviours and to use metacognitive strategies and processes for solving puzzle

tasks. According to Nisbet and Shucksmith (1986), the rationale behind misconceptions about the capacities of children would be related to the inadequacies in the methods used to research metacognitive knowledge in children (experiments, mainly). Often the inappropriate tools employed with children would reveal and pay more attention to what children are not able to do rather than what they can do. In other words, the issue of inappropriate tools reveal what children cannot do rather than what they can do. Moreover, the use of inappropriate tools to research children might focus on the errors children make and what they cannot perform (Whitebread, 2007). Nisbet and Shucksmith (1986) argue that children actually have the knowledge required to perform metacognitive processes, but the problem mainly occurs when it comes to applying that knowledge to spontaneously use strategies with a cognitive goal. Thus, metacognitive knowledge does gradually develop, as children grow older. In this sense, Piagetian concepts, such as assimilation and accommodation, can be related to the development of metacognition in children, since the more experience they have the better they will be in using metacognitive strategies (Fisher, 1998). In spite of this claim, it is also worth mentioning recent research studies conducted in the field of pair-assessment with children learning English as second or foreign language in Asia. These studies have discovered that children aged nine and eleven years old are able to provide accurate assessment to their classmates. Moreover, more specific and elaborate feedback is given by older children who were eleven years old (Butler, 2015). Therefore, as children get older and more experienced, they start to develop more metacognitive knowledge and strategies, if they are immersed in a context in which they are encouraged and trained on its use (Brown and Walker, 1983). Children will learn what strategies are available for them, how they are applied and when they are effective (Paris and Newman, 1990; p. 92).

### **2.7.3 Self-regulation, metacognition and cognitive processes**

Constructs like self-regulation, metacognition and cognitive processes are closely connected. According to Boekaerts (1999), metacognition regulates the cognitive strategies of people. Indeed, the close relationship between metacognition and cognition mainly relies on the fact that cognitive activities are subjected to metacognition. Self-regulated learning (SRL) has emerged as another concept that in practice it can help children to improve their primary education (Boekaerts, 1999). SRL can be defined as learning that is independent and academically effective. According to Davies (2011), self-regulation involves the application of logical thinking, being able to delay immediate impulses and the constant attempt to maintain concentration and the achievements of certain goals. In order to be successful, this type of learning must involve aspects of metacognition,



intrinsic motivation and strategy use (Winne and Perry, 2000; Perry et al. 2000). According to Perry et al. (2000) self-regulated learners do exercise metacognition by:

- 1) Analysing the demands of task in relation to their strengths and/or limitations.
- 2) Searching their repertoire of effective learning and problem-solving strategies for ones that will optimize their learning processes and products.

Perhaps, there is evidence that metacognitive skills develop slowly and gradually. This study aims to address this gap in the literature and provide empirical data in order to discover if young learners can engage in metacognitive conversations about the way they learn English in Chile. The following will discuss issues related to researching metacognition with young learners.

#### **2.7.4 Researching metacognition with children**

According to Bronson (2000), the development of metacognitive and self-regulatory processes in young children are essential for their psychological growth. In spite of the importance of research to be devoted to this area, there is still a big gap in empirical research about researching with children in the field of Applied Linguistics (Pinter, 2010). Similarly, the evidence provided on how children aged less than eight years old show metacognitive behaviour is scarce. However, some scholars (Whitebread et al. 2005) point out a growing interest by the academic community in seeking evidence of metacognitive development by very young children.

Much of the research about metacognition and self-regulated learning has been carried out in secondary education or children aged above ten years old (Perry, et. al 2004; Dignath et al, 2008), few studies adequately cover evidence of metacognitive processes and behaviours in children aged under eight years old. One of the main reasons of the lack of research in this area relies on the belief that young learners have difficulty to deal with cognitive and metacognitive processes (Paris and Newman, 1990; Perry et al. 2000; Perry et al. 2002). In order to break this common assumption, empirical studies have revealed that young children can be involved in regulation when doing learning activities (Perry, 1998). However, the lack of research studies on this area seems to be not the only constraint impeding the generation of more investigations. There has been a big debate regarding the appropriateness of the research methods employed to investigate young learners.

According to Elshout-Mohr, et al. (1999) the problem still remains in the methods or approaches that are problematically adapted to investigate classroom settings. Moreover, Perry et

al. (2002) discuss the importance of the new interest in socio-cognitive and sociocultural models to apply qualitative techniques to ameliorate the understanding and perception of how students and teachers see their particular teaching- learning context. Qualitative research methods, such as observations can provide empirical evidence about what children say they do (in interviews for example) and what they actually do. Whitebread et al. (2007) emphasizes the power of utilizing observational procedures for the study of young children. The use of observations would help to reveal and describe non-verbal information, often missed by more quantitative methods. Indeed, the author states that the focus on giving great importance to verbal information often elicited from laboratory-based studies have led to underestimating the potential of children developing self-regulatory and metacognitive abilities. One question that still needs to be asked, however, is how suitable are studies conducted on reading and writing tasks. Most of the research studies showing evidence of development of metacognitive skills and/or knowledge by children have been conducted in children doing reading and writing tasks (Perry, 2000; Whitebread, et al. 2007).

#### **2.7.5 Further Research related to metacognition and children.**

Extensive and further research in the area of metacognition and children is proposed by Iiskala et al. (2004). This study emphasizes the potentiality that investigating metacognitive processes in collaborative contexts or interaction such a cooperative learning which may reveal important advances in the field of children developing metacognition. The authors argue that there is a lack of studies related to metacognition in more collaborative learning, since most of the research conducted in this field has been done at an individual level, leaving behind to some extent the role of metacognition in the interaction among pupils. Moreover, there is little evidence and few attempts made by the academic community to explore the development of metacognition in collaborative learning.

According to Iiskala et al. (2004), metacognitive processes can occur at both individual and inter-individual level. In order to provide empirical data, the research study was conducted on fourth grade students (ten years old) who were observed and interviewed about their performance and feelings when developing mathematical word problem solving. Children solved those

problems in pairs. The results of this investigation demonstrated metacognitive activity between each pair and that children were able to:

- Monitor and regulate problem solving.
- Monitor the progress of their work by using strategies such as referring to previous experiences, presenting alternative solutions, assessing the task process and stopping and giving reasons for their own solutions.
- Realize that they would have got the wrong answer to a certain mathematical problem if they had worked alone, since their peer could see things the other one could not without their help.
- When solving the problems, there was mutual metacognitive level of correction; and also, interpretation took place throughout the solution process.
- Engage in negotiation when solving the task.
- Despite these positive results, it is important to mention that the evidence of these children developing metacognitive processes in collaborative tasks emerged mainly when the mathematical problem was difficult for them or presented a challenge. In tasks that were easy for both participants, it was not explicit that students used metacognitive activity.

## **2.8. RESEARCHING CHILDREN**

The following section will discuss issues related to researching children, as this is the core of the study. Firstly, the discussion will focus on the role of children in research and their place in research studies. Secondly, issues related to power gap between adults and children will be discussed. Lastly, the role of children in research, children as co-researchers and the voices of children of research will be dealt.

### **2.8.1 The Role of Children in Research**

The role of children as participants in research studies remains ignored (Pinter, 2013). Traditionally, more positivist approaches have been dominant over the research of children, in which young learners are considered as objects to be researched and the methods used to collect data were often experiments carried out on large longitudinal studies, based on measuring one ability that consequently would be compared and correlated with others results (Pinter, 2013) or studies that are concentrated on an isolated part of learning like task-based learning or strategy use (Pinter and Zandian, 2014). The rationale behind this may rely on the premise that there is no point in asking children about their opinions because their answers may not be trusted, therefore, there

is a need for adults or researchers to utilize observation or experiments, in order to provide valid evidence about children (Pinter and Zandian, 2014). In spite of this trend, there has been a tendency and a shift from research to incorporate children's perspectives, which seeks to involve children as active participants (Kuchah and Pinter, 2012).

### **2.8.2. Children as Co-Researchers**

According to Pinter (2013) children should be allocated a central and autonomous status in research. This new approach looks for participatory approaches, where children to some extent have possibilities of shaping the research agenda. Moreover, in more participatory research, children are invited to contribute with their ideas through conversations.

This participatory approach includes tools that are more "participant friendly", which would be closer to the preferred way of children to express themselves, such as drawing, drama, music, storytelling or photos (Pinter and Zandian, 2014). In this sense, research with children would come to solve the problem in contexts where children cannot be involved in all the processes of the research (Pinter and Zandian, 2012). It has been suggested as an effective technique when researching with children to consider during the research a space for providing opportunities for children to be trained into research, with the purpose of making the most of their involvement in a bottom-up approach research, which considers their opinions (Pinter and Zandian, 2012).

### **2.8.3. Power Gap between Adults and Children in Research**

One of the main problems found in researching with children is the wide gap in terms of power between children and adults or researchers. The concept of researching with children requires the reformulation of the power relationships if the children are given as much responsibility as adults in research. It is extremely relevant to work in a new type of relationship between children and adults, which would reduce this power gap. According to Kuchah and Pinter (2012), researchers could look for ways to reduce the distance between children and adults. For example, in a study conducted with children in Cameroon (Kuchah and Pinter, 2012) Kuchah attempted to approach children in a less distant position by lowering his status; he explained to the children that he was teacher, but also a student, which would be a way to show empathy with young learners, since both share the same status in some way. Moreover, another way to reduce this gap would be during the data collection period. Researchers should have the disposition to devote time in building a bond relationship with children. In this regards Christensen (2004) suggests that if researchers are

willing to include the opinions and collaboration from children during the research process, they need to be open to negotiate identities with children, consider their agendas, motives, and interpretations.

#### **2.8.4 Children's Voices**

How can the voices of children be truly expressed and interpreted in research? This issue has gained great importance considering the new attempts research has been doing on finding ways of representing more authentically the voice of children voices instead of adults interpreting their statements from an “adult point of view”. However, the path of looking for neutrality when portraying individuals’ voices would be a hard one, since those voices are a construction of social practices and the context surrounding people (Pinter and Zandian, 2012). Additionally, the data that could be obtained from young learners during the research process might be obscure in the sense that what children say would be distorted by what they believe teachers or adults would expect to hear, therefore, they may prefer to give the right answer (or the expected answer) rather than the true answer (Kuchah and Pinter, 2012). When conducting interviews or group discussions with children, the researcher must pay attention to all the answers given by them, because during these interactions unexpected or unsolicited comments may arise and more interesting data could emerge. What is more, spontaneous reactions from children can challenge the points of view and assumptions that adults may have about young learners (Kuchah and Pinter, 2012). In my own experience, it is important to mention that I attempted to tackle these issues in this study. First of all, I spent long time in the field, getting to know the children and then conducting the research tasks as well as spending time outside the study. I accepted invitations to have lunch, play during break-time with the participants of the project, as well as their friends and classmates that were not part of the study. The relationship built between the children and I gained great relevance since we developed a trust relationship where children felt confident to speak and were happy to participate in the research project. Furthermore, the use of actual tasks to provide experience of what they could do in English working with the same partner for a period of eight months also helped to enrich the learning experience underlying this study.

### **2.8.5 Research studies conducted on teaching English to children in Chile**

Little research has been conducted on teaching of English in primary school topic although there has been a raising interest in researching this area. For example, Inostroza (2011) conducted research with thirty Chilean teachers of English in relation to their perspectives on group work and large classes. The study revealed that teachers encountered many problems related to class size and lack of resources. An online questionnaire was applied and interviews were conducted. The results of this study revealed that adopting a communicative approach embedded in the planning for English lesson can have positive outcomes. In relation to regarding the views of primary school children, Inostroza (2018) published an article aimed at presenting the perceptions of fourth graders about their English lessons at school and young learners' ideal English lessons. The findings of this study provided empirical data to certain aspects children valued the most in their English lessons as well as how an ideal classroom is like. Lastly, in 2018, Inostroza explored the incorporation of "hands-on games" in fourth grade of primary state schools in Santiago, Chile. This study showed that in spite of the positive impact that active learning can have in children's interactions and participations, teachers still feel constrained by the demands of the schools in terms of meeting tests schedules and following the states curricula which impedes the constant implementation of "hands-on" activities.

## **2.9 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PRESENT STUDY**

After reviewing in the literature, the main issues related to the study of children in primary school and how they are defined in the literature, as well as theories that have been traditionally employed to study children as group in constant development, I will summarize and outline the main gaps found in the literature in relation to the following areas underpinning this study:

- Much of what has been written about the way children learn has been strongly informed by practitioners' beliefs and perceptions of how children behave. Even though these experiences are valid, it is also true that there is an urgent necessity to conduct research studies which data could serve to construct and develop appropriate pedagogies for teaching YLLS.
- Little research has been conducted on what are perceptions, feelings and opinions children have in respect to the way they learn and are taught English. Therefore, current recommended pedagogies to teach English to young learners are mainly based on superficial overgeneralizations

made by adults and experts, but little space is devoted to incorporate the ideas and preferences of children as English language learners.

- Commonly, data gathering methods coming from the field of experimental psychology have been employed to research children. However, these studies need to be re-formulated and new techniques and participatory activities could be included as instruments of data collection.
- Children are often believed to have a more concrete thinking and often struggle to process abstract thinking or complex mental process such as analysing or reflection. This assumption has supported the idea that young learners are not able to develop metacognitive skills applied to English language learning.
- Children and their voices have been typically shadowed, ignored and not taken seriously either in research or educational fields.

Regarding the former points I have just discussed, this ethnography attempts to address these issues by delving into the reality of how children can be encouraged to reflect about the way they learn and are taught English in Chile. Regarding the present lack of empirical data obtained from research studies, this two-phase longitudinal study will provide further information about children currently learning English and their perceptions of how they make sense of English language teaching. It is important to mention that one of the most important contributions of this study is the methodology I designed, developed and implemented. Every task and activity for each session conducted with the children from both schools were carefully crafted and used in practice during a two-year period, where the children and I also built a relationship that also added a special feature to the methodology employed in this study.

## **2.10 SUMMARY**

In this chapter I have covered literature related to children learning English, play, games and fun. I also explored themes underlying the scope of this study such as metacognition, self-regulation and issues found in the literature related to researching with children. Although current global tendencies and pressures to include English language teaching from younger ages have been widely discussed, there is still a need to conduct more research in the field relating to how children learn English in EFL contexts as Chile. Due to the limited number of publications and research conducted in the field of EFL about young learners, there is scarce knowledge of the perceptions children have about their English language education at school. In order to fill this gap in the literature this study attempts to provide an understanding of what young learners think about the

way they learn English in primary school by employing participatory methods to actively involve children in the data collection methods designed for this study.

## **CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In order to address the gaps detected in the literature (see Chapter II) in relation to how children learn English at primary school, metacognition and researching with children, I conducted an ethnographic study. The gaps in the literature can be summarized in two main points. Firstly, there is little information in relation to the development and use of metacognitive skills with children aged under ten years old. Part of this lack of knowledge about metacognition with this age group may be due to the fact that data collection methods employed with children were often based on experiments that are not close to the interest of children (Elshout-Mohr, et al. 1999). Secondly, relevant literature suggests that seven years-old children have not fully developed their metacognitive skills yet (Veenman, et. al 2006). Therefore, there is a need to provide more empirical data in the field of researching with children in Applied Linguistics. In order to contribute to this field, this study attempted to use tasks and activities as elicitation tools to encourage reflection from children and to provide robust empirical data that can also contribute in terms of innovative methodology as to how to research children.

### **3.2 AIMS OF THE STUDY**

Taking these issues into consideration, this research project aims to discover:

How do children talk /reflect about the strategies and the activities they use when learning/practising English? Since children are highly emotional and expressive beings, the study takes into account not only what children say, but also their observable spontaneous reactions along the process of data collection. In addition to this, it was also relevant to discover how such reflection can be elicited from the children by the use of tasks which provide opportunities for them to use/ practice their English and immediately afterwards reflect on this experience. Attention was also given to how children worked and engaged with different tasks that I created myself.



They were adapted to meet the purpose of fostering the reflection of children as well as to meet the educational reality of Chile. Therefore, one broader research question was based on how children could reflect about the way they learn and are taught English in primary school in Chile. In order to address the issues mentioned above, this ethnography study was guided by the following research question:

**Research question:**

How do children reflect about their own English language learning?

- What are their comments, opinions, reactions and perceptions about learning English in general?
- How could young children be encouraged to reflect on their own English language learning processes in relation to working with specific interactive gap tasks?

### **3.3 RESEARCH TRADITION**

#### **3.3.1 Qualitative Research**

In order to answer the research question and the sub-questions stated above, this research study is framed within the qualitative paradigm. Even though scientific approaches have positioned qualitatively oriented research as belonging to a “soft” tradition (Richards, 2003), this study chooses to benefit from the opportunities that this approach offers. The reasons for selecting Qualitative research, mainly relies on the fact that this approach allows researchers to explore the intricacies and conundrums of the contexts in which people live, where the research is often conducted in their natural setting, permitting to explore how meanings are constructed by them and how they interact with their environment.

In this particular study, an exploratory longitudinal ethnography was chosen in order to allow more detailed insights to come to the surface in relation to how children aged seven to nine years old would reflect about their English language learning when performing different tasks, within the Chilean educational context. For this particular study, methods for gathering data were mainly tasks, drawings, video- recordings, interviews and field notes in relation to the work done with children.

### 3.3.2 Ethnography

Traditionally ethnography has been a qualitative research approach, which was originally utilised in anthropological studies. Ethnographic studies seek to describe and understand deeply the behaviour of a particular social or cultural group (Richards, 2003; p. 14). In addition to this, it becomes essential that the researcher spends longer time in contact in the field, adopting a role understood as “participant observer”. In the case of this research study, I started phase 1 in 2014 from April to May. In this fieldwork I had the pure intention of discovering what were the possibilities of implementing some tasks with children in relation to how they reflect about their learning in general and learning English more specifically. Interestingly, after working with the tasks I had prepared and having analysed the data gathered during those two months, I realized that it was essential to prepare a second phase, which would take forward the experience into a longer period of fieldwork (eight months). It was also necessary to incorporate a wider variety of activities and tasks in order to construct a fuller picture of each group of children in each school. Conversations with the children outside the context of the research study allowed finding out about the lives of the children beyond the English practice sessions, their lives at school and outside school. Furthermore, during the time I was in the field conducting the research, I faced many challenges. These challenges were specifically related to ethical issues about researching with children and the challenges associated with negotiating access to the schools in order to work with children. Although, I carefully organized the second phase of my fieldwork, I did not foresee how my own hybrid role as a teacher-/researcher/assistant/ PhD student would add to the complexity of the study itself.

One of the main issues often discussed in ethnographies is actually the multiplicity of roles that the ethnographer needs to adopt during fieldwork. In contrast to finding a definite role, careful consideration needs to be taken to judge what roles will help with immersing oneself completely into the field. Instead, ethnographers are constantly dealing with balancing their own role in the research study and consciously distinguish and understand between insiders/ outsiders’ point of view (Heigham and Croker, 2009) which can be also understood as *emic* and *etic* perspectives. Issues related to the *emic* and *etic* perspectives will be discussed in more detail in section 3.3.3 below (positionality). The rationale for choosing this approach within the qualitative tradition is mainly related to the fact that so little is currently known about the perceptions of Chilean young learners in relation to the way they learn and are taught English within the primary school context. According to Heigham and Croker (2009) and Mackey and Gass, (2005. p169) ethnographic approaches are especially relevant and appropriate when there is not enough information in relation

to a certain context, group of people or situation. As it was mentioned previously, in the literature review chapter, there are scarce research studies that have been dedicated to ask children their own opinions about their English language learning. In addition to this, it is necessary to adapt appropriate research tools to investigate children. Indeed, more appealing materials for children, written and designed according to their interests and preferences would benefit the quality of the data obtained. Taking these issues into account, I decided to spend more time in both schools with the purpose of learning more about primary school children and their thoughts and views on the kind of English education they were receiving and their own perceptions as English language learners.

### 3.3.3 Positionality

Frequent discussions regarding ethnographies are often set around the role of the researchers and how they position themselves inside and outside the fieldwork site. It is important to mention that one of the major limitations of ethnographic studies is how to strike a balance between the insider (*emic*) and the outsider perspective (*etic*) (Richards, 2003; McKay, 2006). *Emic* is understood as the insider's views of a particular culture or community. In my case, I was an insider to some extent, since I am a Chilean, and in that culture, I am at home and I shared this with the participants; I attempted to collect an *emic* perspective of the children's experiences with learning English. Meanwhile, *etic* which is defined as how the researchers interpret what they see largely from their own perspective (Richards, 2003). In all of my roles, I was always considered as an outsider since I was not part of any of the schools. My visits to both schools were arranged on a weekly basis (once a week with each pair in each school). Through the activities I brought to every session and the casual conversations I maintained with the children, I tried to provide an understanding of what and how those children learned and how they were taught English from their own point of views, their words and means of communication like: drawings, sharing personal stories; bringing their own toys and books in English from their homes or the school library.

In order to do so, I adopted different roles according to the place and the position I needed for obtaining access. For example, I had to explain who I was when introducing myself to the children, to the headroom teacher (as in School 2) or teacher of English of the girls (as in School 1). At the same time, I deeply reflected on how to introduce myself to the girls, their classroom and other people around the schools (such as janitors, key keepers, librarians, porters). On several occasions, during my visits to the schools I saw that these assigned roles would shift during one visit. Together with all of the issues I described above, I also struggled with the self-perception I

constructed about my own role to myself and to others within my own research study. Furthermore, there were also tensions with my memories and knowledge of teaching English at primary level, which made me go back in time and I was constantly looking at myself as a Chilean teacher of English, and at the same time, I had to remind myself that I was a researcher collecting data for my PhD. In addition to this, in order to comply with my role as a researcher collecting data, I needed to learn to adopt the outsiders' perspective. Since the main aim of the study was to foreground children's perceptions over my own interpretation of their views as an adult, I strived for reducing my power and prioritise what the children had to say about their own experiences as English language learners.

Regarding *emic* and *etic* perspectives, recently, the discussion has evolved towards the recommendation of adopting a *holistic* point of view of what is being studied. Thus, ethnographers attempt to attain a holistic view of a particular social context, they do so by examining people's behaviours in their natural environment, within a given context (Heigham and Croker, 2009). In order to achieve this holistic point of view in this longitudinal research study, I visited the schools in order to immerse myself into the routines and the common places children share in the school. In fact, before starting the second phase of my fieldwork, and while I was negotiating consent from teachers and parents, and I was getting a place to conduct my study within each school, I spent weeks just visiting the school and playing with the children during break time. Sometimes, I could go and play with the children both those who were participants of the study and their friends. On some other days, I just went to observe the children, learn their names and see who their friends were and what kind of games they played. All of these instances were really special and helped to build the bond and the close relationship I established later with each group of children in both schools. I also went every week to each school during those eight months to meet with one pair of children at least once a week. When we had time, we worked with the activities of the project or I would wait and be with the children during their breaks. When I was invited to spend their breaks with them, I would just stay on. I also accompanied the children to have lunch at school where I met their friends outside the projects and could encounter more informal conversations. It is important to mention that I also attended those school events or only if children invited me, if not, I was just observing from a distance. I received plenty of invitations, and in School 2 staying for lunch became part of my visit. I also had opportunities to talk to the teachers of the children in School 2, which also allowed me to see a different perspective on school life.

### **3.3.4 Methods of Data Collection**

This section will begin with the description of the main data collection methods. The whole process took two years. Phase one was conducted from April 2014 to May 2014 (two months) and Phase two started from March 2015 to October 2015 (eight months).

#### **3.3.4.1 Fieldwork**

In relation to data collection methods, it is important to mention that ethnographic fieldwork was my main method to have access to see the children in a school in the periphery of Santiago, Chile. One of the main aims of my fieldwork was to get the children to share with their classmates and me what they truly believed about their English education as learners of English in Chile, through the use of concrete activities or tasks that would encourage children to reflect. My inner curiosity as a researcher was to get to know the children in a deeper and meaningful way. In order to do this, I strived to give as many opportunities as possible for the children to speak from their own perspective as active participants and experts of their own experiences.

As it was mentioned at the beginning of the ethnography section, ethnography does require from the researcher to spend long time in the field in order to observe the dynamics of the whole school and the interactions among participants within and outside the project.

#### **3.3.4.2 Observation and video recorded data**

By spending long periods of time in both schools, for a two month period in phase one and eight months in phase two, I had the opportunity of getting to know the particularities as well as the subtle and unique features of each specific context, which would have not been possible in a large-scale study over a short period of time. In the specific case of this present research study, I immersed myself into the field and tried to have an open mind and let the research flow within the peculiarities of each context and group of people involved. Since I actively and intentionally created a temporary space for children to work on activities and reflect about their learning process, it was not possible for me to have a passive role. However, I intervened only by giving instructions and preparing the material for each session and then often followed the children's lead for further suggestions. Each week the activities would gradually increase in their level of complexity. Because of the many visits to the school, I decided to record each one of the sessions I prepared

with the children as part of my fieldwork. Each session was fully recorded and I selected key episodes for analysis after I had watched each recording several times. I used video recording in order to have consistent system to register each session with the children. In this sense, video recording worked as a supporting tool, since I was moderating and facilitating the tasks at the same time, I was not going to be able to organize everything and attempt to develop a bond with the children; and take notes. I did take notes while children were working on their own. In the following sub-section, my field notes are going to be discussed.

#### **3.3.4.3 Fieldnotes**

Notes taken during the data collection, where the researcher is in direct contact with the field are considered as another tool for data collection often employed in qualitative research. Although, this form of reporting/collecting data is very beneficial, since it allowed me to reflect about my own experience during my stay in the field, one of the main drawbacks of talking extensive fieldnotes is that the longer time that is spent collecting data, the longer would be the time needed to write the diary (Richards, 2003). I kept a special notebook where I recorded my main reflections; recorded unusual events observed and registered any change or adaptation of the activities while I was carrying out the study. The entries of my fieldwork notes were generally finalised after carrying out each session with the children, where I included the names of the girls who participated, the date, the exact time at which the session was recorded, as well as the actual tasks completed. If there was anything that was not planned and it came directly from children, I kept a record of those ideas as well. Examples of these are letters or drawings from the children to me, stars and prizes the children created for the monkey glove puppet. Most of my fieldnotes were taken while the children were doing the information gap tasks. I kept all the material of each session organised in a chronological order and in this way be easily available if necessary for future reference. Examples of my fieldnotes can be found on appendix 1.

#### **3.3.4.4 Triangulation**

A wide variety of approaches and empirical materials are needed and required in order to conduct qualitative research studies, especially ethnographic studies (Richards, 2003). In the case of this study, in order to allow more space for children to speak about their opinions and perceptions in relation to their English language learning I designed and employed a wide variety of activities. I conducted this study in two phases, attempting to carry out ethnography, where, for two years I

investigated the same groups of children in two schools. The first phase consisted of an exploratory small- scale fieldwork for two months in order to discover if children would be willing to reflect about their own language learning experiences with an immediate concrete learning experience such as after doing information gap tasks. Meanwhile, the second phase was mainly oriented to take the experience forward and diversify the methods of data collection and persist with them for a longer time. In the following section, I will discuss and provide deeper description of Phase one and Phase two.

### **3.4. PHASE ONE AND PHASE TWO**

The following sub sections will be devoted to explain in further detail the two phases in which the fieldwork for this study took place. Firstly, this discussion will begin by providing a thorough description of how Phase one was shaped, developed and analysed. Secondly, phase two will be further explained and developed. Phase two represented a longer experience with more details and activities.

#### **3.4.1 Phase One**

In order to incorporate what was observed during Phase one (see section 3.4 below) this research study attempted to take forward the experience lived during phase one with the girls and continued working with them for a longer period of time. The study was carried out in the same two schools and with the same group of children that participated in phase one, which was conducted in April-May 2014. Although this study does not study gender in particular, only girls participated in the study for two reasons: 1) School 1 is a Catholic school for girls only and 2) School 2 none of the boys who had volunteered to participate in the study were granted permission by their parents. At the same time, these two schools represent two different realities of the Chilean school system. For instance, School 1 works with a special project designed by a private consultancy to teach English to children. The project is implemented from kindergarten until the last year of secondary school. Children had four pedagogical hours of English a week in 2015; in previous years learners across the school used to have five hours of English lessons a week, forty-five minutes of English lessons per day, meanwhile School 2 corresponds to a subsidised school located in the south periphery of Santiago. The children in this school follow the model and curriculum proposed by the Chilean government. Accordingly, primary school students have two pedagogical hours of English a week with a teacher of English.

The main aim of Phase one was to explore if performing the same kind of tasks in multiple sessions would encourage children to reflect about their own learning processes. This study lasted approximately two months, starting from mid-April to the end of May in 2014. Ten children from two schools participated in phase one. In School 1, six children were granted permission to be part of Phase one, meanwhile in School 2; four children participated in the study. The main aim of conducting Phase one was to explore the field, observe lower primary classes and see how children would react to different tasks I designed in order to discover how through the use of repetitive activities children could reflect about their learning processes. For Phase one, I designed repetitive tasks, which were information gap tasks, where during five sessions children engaged with these language-learning games. At the beginning of the project, children chose a partner and worked with the same partner over five sessions. Each session lasted between forty-five minutes and an hour. The drawings in the activities were chosen by taking into consideration vocabulary taken from the guidelines proposed by the Chilean Ministry of Education as well as the course- book they provided for first and second year of primary school. Children from both schools worked in pairs and each of the five sessions with each pair was video-recorded. The data gathered during Phase one, were uninterrupted video-recordings of each session, drawings of activities created and conducted by children, information-gap activities performed by the children and the notes I took in my field notes after each session in each school. The core data gathered during Phase one were also the recordings of how children reflected about their own learning during the reflection stage. In each session children had to do approximately three information gap activities, and I encouraged them to reflect after the first and the third attempt. Reflection after the first attempt had the purpose of seeing what children thought about the activities at first and then in the third attempt, I wanted to discover if children changed their opinions after having more practice with the tasks. However, due to time issues and children's boredom, I decided to only ask questions at the end of the activities. Moreover, the reflection stage was conducted as a conversation between children, me and a monkey puppet I brought along. During the reflection stage, I asked children a set of questions in relation to how they felt when performing the tasks and what can be done to make the tasks better in the future. Children were allowed to suggest changes in the activities too. After the first two sessions children were also invited to create and conduct their own information gap activities; later I asked them to reflect about that process too. During the last session in each school, together we looked at different running recordings and the children were asked to express their opinions of what was learned during the project as well as how they felt.

Details in relation to the scope, contexts, participants and activities conducted during phase one will be described in the following sections.



### 3.5. RATIONALE AND SCOPE OF PHASE ONE

Conducting a first phase had multiple benefits for the research study since it helped to determine the content of the data, as well as the procedures I followed when designing and implementing phase two.

#### 3.5.1. Context

According to the Chilean educational system, School 1 and School 2 correspond to “semi-private” schools, which are those that were partially economical supported by the Chilean government. Consequently, the remaining amount of money is supplied by the parents of the children. Even though, both schools are located in impoverished areas, families pay for their education (the lowest amount of money semi-private schools receive though).

**Table 1. Summary of general information about target schools**

	School 1	School 2
Plan for teaching English to children	Follows a private project of English designed by a consultancy.	Follows the guidelines proposed by the Chilean Ministry of Education.
Hours of lessons a week	Every day children have 45 minutes of English lessons per week.	Two pedagogical hours a week (1.5 hours)
Children per classroom	45 children per classroom	45 children per classroom
School location	North periphery of Santiago Chile	South periphery of Santiago Chile

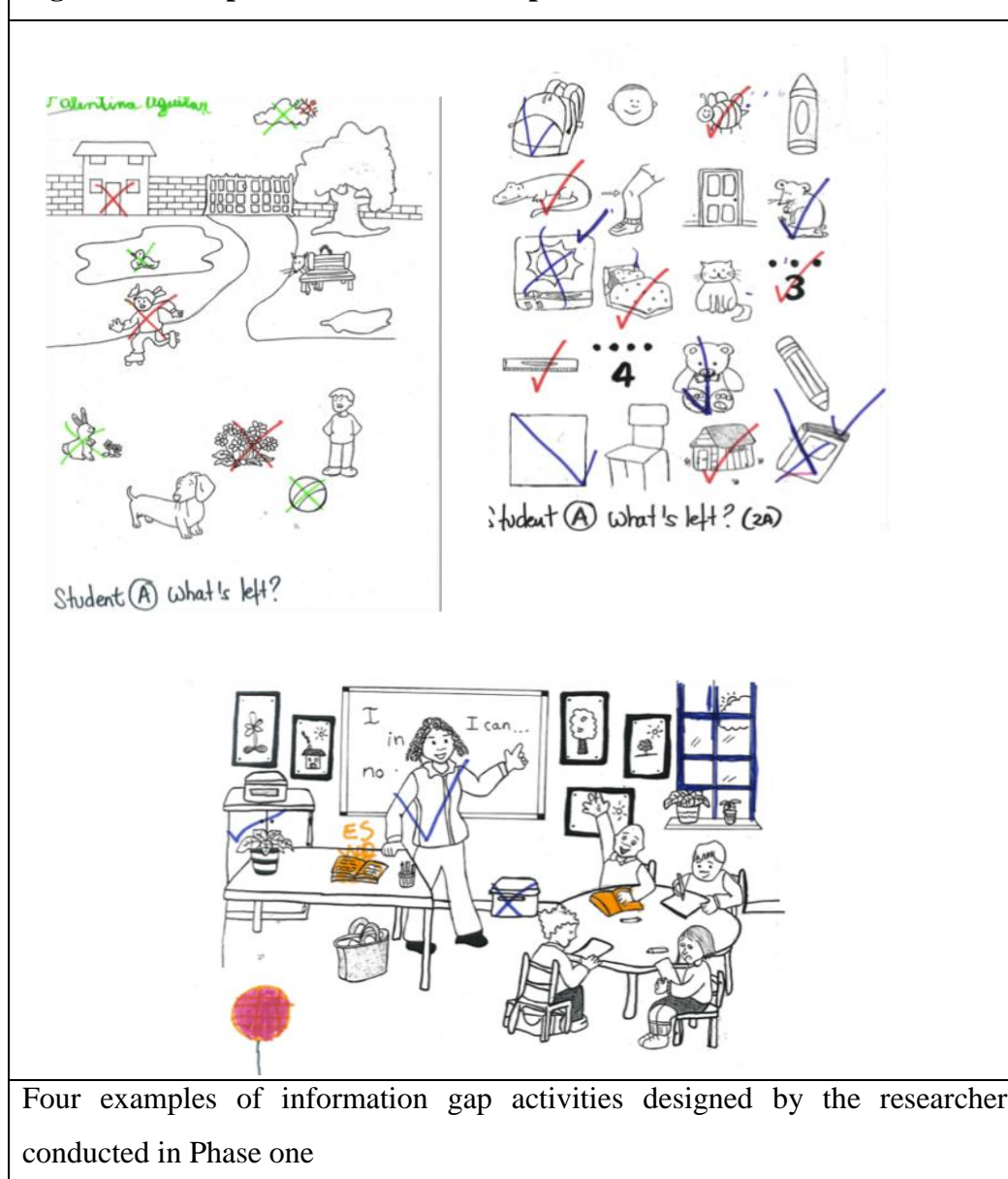
### **3.5.2. Tasks**

Following the discussion of tasks and children in the Literature Review Chapter, tasks were the main data collection employed in both Phase one and Phase two. In this sense, with the purpose of eliciting reflection from children about their own learning processes an activity called: “information gap task”, was employed in the first phase of this study. The main purpose of using a task was to provide a concrete learning activity and engage children immediate reflection about a recent experience. These types of tasks were used repetitively, which means that the same task was conducted several times along the project. They consisted of a set of ten drawings, which gradually increased the level of complexity of the tasks session after session (see figure 1). As it was stated in the introduction section, the vocabulary set used for including drawings was based on the proposal guidelines from the Chilean Ministry of Education for 1<sup>st</sup> Grade and the two first content of units of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade course book. Examples of these activities can be found below.

#### **3.5.2.1 Information gap activities**

Children were invited to work on simple gap tasks (described on section 3.9.3.1 later) on repeated occasions in order to use their English interactively with a friend; these tasks related experiences were then used as the basis for reflection. These tasks correspond to activities typically used in English lessons called information gaps activities or barrier activities (referential communication tasks; Yule, 1997). The drawings for these activities have been adapted and drawn by me. The drawings were left black and white, in order to avoid children getting confused with colours

**Figure 1. Examples of Information Gap Activities**



Four examples of information gap activities designed by the researcher conducted in Phase one

The procedure of how these type tasks were conducted, is described as follows:

- 1) Each pair sits facing at each other. An object in between them impeded the children to look at each other's worksheet/activity.
- 2) Each child received a worksheet, in which they worked with the same drawing, but the elements marked were different and in a different colour (student A red; student B blue).
- 3) The pairs took turns to give the instructions by mentioning first if the element must be ticked, crossed out or coloured and then they should mention the name of the element. The girls were expected to give and exchange instructions like: "*tick a dog*", "*cross out an elephant*".
- 4) After all the instructions have been given (the instructions children had to follow for phase two were: cross out, tick, colour and draw. In school 1 children decided to include "write") they both

compared their worksheets and answered the question: What's left? children had to mention all the elements that were not marked on the worksheet. If children did not know the name of the object in English, they were encouraged to use English rather than Spanish (their mother tongue), but they could use compensation strategies such as gestures or miming to make themselves understood. Synonyms were also allowed when giving instructions, for example if the girls could not recall the word "girl", but they said "she" it was still accepted, as long as it permitted the partner to understand the instruction.

### **3.5.3 Sessions**

Phase one was carried out by visiting each school five times in a two-month period. Each visit represented a session. Each session was planned with a different set of tasks and drawings. New instructions were introduced on each session. A description of what sort of events and activities conducted the sessions are described in the following sub-sections.

*Session 1:* The first day was designed for children to practise and internalise the instructions of the game as well as the specific instruction for the session. For the first session, children were asked to follow the instruction "cross out". The day before a set of flashcards with the vocabulary contained in the worksheets were shown to the children. The same procedure was followed before starting the first session. In order to help children to get familiar with the type of task, the researcher modelled the activity first along with the children with the purpose of:

- setting the rules of the "game"
- showing the students how these types of tasks are done
- helping students how to give instructions
- clearing out any doubts while doing the activity
- making clear that pairs are not allowed to see other's worksheet

During the first session the researcher explained to the children that they were going to be video recorded and showed them the consent forms. In order to introduce the camera in a less threatening way, the camera was it operated on a tripod where I left the camera on so the children could then get used to it.

- *Session 2:* The pairs continued working on information gap activities, but with different pictures. This session included working with three different information gap tasks each of them containing a great number of elements and more challenging components in terms of vocabulary. This time “ticks” were introduced as an additional instruction. Both pieces of paper had the same drawings, but different pictures were ticked. Each child took turns to give instructions, they told each other to tick the elements they had ticked in their piece of paper. After they had finished giving instructions I asked them: *What is left?* Children compared their pictures and saw if they followed the instructions. Then, they saw if they agreed on the items that were not ticked. Each child should have the same items ticked and not ticked by the end of the game. After comparing their answers, both children were asked to discuss their opinion about how they felt about their performance when doing the activities. When they finished their discussion, the pairs set back to task again. They did very similar activities, but with different worksheets twice. When the third activity was done children were asked to reflect about their performance and the tasks again, by answering questions in table 2 below. These questions were asked in Spanish.

**Table 2. Types of questions asked to children during the reflection stage**

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How do you feel now after doing these tasks?</li> <li>- Do you remember what happened the first time you did it?</li> <li>- Has it improved? How?</li> <li>- What helped you to get it right this time?</li> <li>- What would help you to get it right?</li> <li>- What can you do to make it better?</li> </ul> |
|---|

After discussing these questions, I gave out blank sheets to the pairs. Children were encouraged to design their own activities, by following the pattern they have just done with the vocabulary they had learned in their English lessons. They created their own drawings as well. The second session finished with this activity. At the end, the children were asked to comment on how they felt about designing and carrying out the activity on their own (their strengths, weaknesses, what they liked the most). Children were encouraged to do an extra activity at home and bring it to the following session.

- *Session 3:* Children were asked not only to tick or cross, but also to colour and draw. This session started with the activity the pairs brought as homework. They were expected to start the day's work and carry out their activity without my help. After they had conducted and finished their game, they were asked about their feelings on doing the activity. Children were also asked about the way they designed the activity they brought, they chose the words (the vocabulary), they did the drawings, and I asked children whether they asked or received any help at home to do the homework, or whether they felt anxious or excited. After discussing these issues, I presented the children the new activity for this session. Each pair received two sheets with the same drawing on both pages (no changes were previously done by me on these drawings). One member of the pair was asked to make four changes on the picture they had. They were free in following the instructions, but four modifications in the blank drawings had to be included. For this task children had to:

- Tick an element in the picture.
- Cross an element in the picture.
- Draw one element on the picture.
- Colour one element of the picture.

Since reading skills of children at this age (seven years old) are not well developed (not even in their mother tongue), I wrote the instructions on a whiteboard with drawings next to them, for children to understand and remember the instructions. In the meantime, the partner that was not working on the information gap task was invited to work on an extra activity I brought. The objective of having this activity was to mainly keep the other child busy and distracted seeing what the partner was doing. During this first attempt, the researcher helped the child while doing the activity and checked if the instructions were followed. After the changes were done, the child gave the instructions to the other member of the pair who was waiting. Then, they compared their pictures and saw if they were well followed. After the completion of the activity, I also asked the children how they felt when doing the activity. Then, the other member of the pair was given the same picture in which she was asked to make different changes. After each member of the pair did their activity, I invited children to discuss their answers. After the discussion the children repeated this task.

- *Session 4:* In this information gap activity children received a black and white drawing resembling a classroom. This time instead of making four changes children had to do five on the first attempt, six on the second attempt and seven changes on the third attempt. Each pair received a different picture for each turn. Children were asked to reflect about the activities at the beginning and at the end of the session. Towards the end of the session, children were asked to do an extra activity at home and bring it to the next session.

- *Session 5:* During the last session, I collected the activities completed by the children (just one girl on both schools remembered). I had a last meeting with all the pairs that participated in the intervention. The children and I watched some stills from the sessions I recorded. I invited them to focus on their participation in the tasks. After watching some shots, I asked children to share their comments and ideas about their performance, the activities in general and their final feelings about watching themselves while performing the tasks were recorded. Later, I encouraged children to think about what other games or tasks they would like to play in order to learn English

#### **3.5.4 Outcomes Drawn from Phase One**

What was observed after conducting Phase one as well as what was found after the analysis of the data helped to inform the design of phase two that was carried out in 2015. Phase one had mainly an exploratory aim, having a broader research question in mind. The fieldwork conducted during phase one aimed to discover to what extent children could reflect about their learning and if that reflection could be elicited by the use of tasks. After conducting phase one the scope of phase two was narrowed down and new activities specifically oriented to elicit reflection from children aged what were included. The following lessons have been learnt after implementing Phase 1:

- *Methodology:* phase one helped to try activities such as information gap activities (tasks) in order to see if children would engage with these types of activities. It also provided me the opportunity to learn how to work with children, how to set the tasks and how to record each session.

- *Reflection:* after asking questions in the reflection stage, I realized that asking the same set of questions repetitively was not enough to engage and elicit reflection from children, since they got bored of the questions, therefore a wider variety of tasks were needed to be incorporated, such as those activities I adapted from the European Language Portfolio (please see appendix 2) and the reflection cards (figure 4)

- *Access*: phase one opened the door for continuing working in the same two schools during the phase 2.
- *Relationship with children*: Phase one also provided a good opportunity for me to know the children I was going to work for phase two. Even though we worked for a short period of time (a month and a half), the children and I were able to create an emotional bond. Since this study was a longitudinal research project, I was able to develop a meaningful relationship was one of the most important aspects of the research.
- *Time*: I also learned that more time than a month and a half was needed to collect reflection from children, since trust and confidence needed more time to be built.
- *Puppet*: after phase one, I also decided to give a more relevant role to the monkey puppet I brought along since the children were really attracted to this sort of soft toy Therefore the monkey was to become the main character of every material created for phase two.

In the following section Phase two will be described. References will be made to Phase one when relevant.

### **3.6 PHASE TWO**

Phase two was carried out in Chile from the beginning of March until the end of October in 2015. Originally, the data collection period for phase two was divided into two sub-phases, in which the first sub-phase was going to be the work conducted with children and the second sub-phase corresponded to the work planned with primary school teachers of English. However, due to time and social issues, both processes were carried out at the same time and the work with the teachers due to time and political issues could not be completed.

#### **3.6.1 Phase 2 participants**

In the following sections general characteristics of the participants who took part of second phase will be described. Nine children in total took part of the second phase. In School 2, the group of participants from Phase one remain the same (six girls, aged eight years old) meanwhile in School 1, it was possible to work with only three out of four girls that participated in Phase one, because one of the children was not granted further permission to work in the project from her mother.



### 3.6.2 Target children's Profile

The participants of this study were six girls in School 1 and three girls in School 2. However, both groups of children in both schools were aged between eight and nine years old and were attending third year of primary school in the Chilean education system. For the purposes of gathering participants for phase one, in School 1 the learners were chosen by their teacher of English, who looked at their grades and decided to invite those who have higher marks from the average of their class, meanwhile, in School 2 the head teacher of the class chose ten children, but only four were given permission from their parents. For phase two, the group that participated in phase two from School 2 was reduced to three children. Some activities were conducted in groups some others in pairs and the interview that was carried out individually. Table 3. Presents a summary of general information about the children and the English lessons they receive at this school.

**Table 3. Participants' information summary. School 1 and School 2**

#### School 1

Participants' characteristics	Pair 1	Pair 2	Pair 3
Pseudonyms	Ale- Naty	Emi - Rocío	Cami - Anto
Number of years learning English	Ale has always attended this school. English lessons start in kindergarten. This is her fourth year of learning English.  Naty has always attended this school, but she failed last year. Therefore, this is her fifth year learning English at this school.	Emi and Rocío have always attended this school. English lessons start in kindergarten. This is their fourth year of learning English.	This is Anto's second year learning English at this school. She may have had English lessons in her former school, but four hours a week she does in this school.  Cami has always attended this school. English lessons start in kindergarten. This is her fourth year of learning English.
General characteristics	In this pair Ale was a high achiever and regularly behaved well. Naty was a bit more distracted; it was hard for her to maintain her concentration for longer	In this pair both Emi and Rocío were high achievers in terms of their academic competence. However, both were	Cami and Anto were almost equal in their level of performing the task. Both of them were extrovert and enjoy talking. Cami

	periods of time. She had a recurrent tendency to constantly move. She has a lower level of English competence, but has improved a lot from last year. She is also very talkative and has a cheerful personality.	very shy and tended to be less talkative. They were very good at English and often fast at grasping new words or recalling old vocabulary.	however had a better English performance than, Anto in terms of the number of vocabulary items she knew and could recall.
Year of birth	The girls are approximately eight years old. Therefore, they were born around 2006 - 2007. Except for child, she is one year older. She was born in 2005.		
Type of English classes they are used to	This school works with a special private project to teach English to all their learners. This project used to contemplate English lessons once a day for forty- five minutes from kindergarten to the last year of Secondary School. However, in 2015 one hour was reduced, and private materials was not used anymore. As part of the project, teachers are asked to conduct lessons fully in English, where Spanish is not allowed. These lessons follow a structure where they must begin with a warm-up (singing a song, playing a game). Then there is a routine where the teacher asks questions to the children in relation to the units or the contents they are seeing in their lessons: then, the students and the teacher work with the course-book and do mainly written activities. Finally, the lesson must finish with a round up, where the activity done during the warm-up can be repeated.		
Materials used	Unlike, the reality of the great majority of Chilean schools, during their former three years of learning English at school, these children used to work with a private course-book, which parents bought, different from the one freely given by the government. However, in 2015 there was a change of law in the Chilean Educational system and the buying of private and/or external material was not allowed anymore. For these reasons, from 2015 children started to use the book the Government distributes to learn English in primary school. English lessons mainly rely on the contents given by the book. In addition to this, the teacher also provides extra material given in a form of photocopies from other books or any other extra resource she may found useful. Basic greetings and vocabulary related to the unit can be seen pasted on the wall with big and colourful flashcards.		
Level of English	The children have a good command of English. They manage basic vocabulary as colours, numbers, vocabulary related to animals, clothes, and parts of the house. They also know how to greet in English and even though their level of English may be higher than other children their age, they still struggle to create full sentences, but are able to identify a wide variety of words.		

## School 2

Participants' characteristics	Pair 1	Andrea
In this school four children were part of the project. However, one of the children's mother did not allow her to participate this year, therefore only 3 children were part of the project. There was an attempt to include a new participant, but it was not possible due to administrative issues from the school. The third child engaged in group activities and later pair activities were done by exchanging partners among the three children.		
Pseudonyms	María - Caro	Andrea
Number of years learning English	<p>María has attended this school from 2013 where she had English lessons too. This is her fourth year learning English.</p> <p>Caro has always attended this school. This is her third year learning English at this school.</p>	Andrea has always attended this school of English lessons start in kindergarten. This is her third year of learning English.
General characteristics	<p>In this pair María was a very good student, she was a high achiever and regularly behaved well.</p> <p>Caro was a bit more distracted; it was hard for her to maintain her concentration for longer periods of time. Her knowledge of English was a bit low, but look very interested in participating in the activities and learning English.</p>	Andrea was a good student; she put effort in learning, although she did not have a greater command of English.
Year of birth	The girls are approximately eight years old. Therefore they were born around 2006 - 2007.	
Type of English classes they are used to	This school works with the material given by the Chilean Ministry of Education. Different from School 1, this school did not work with any supporting project, which corresponds to the reality of most schools in Chile, in this context children have two hours of English lessons a week. The teacher of English of the girls is not specialized in teaching English to young learners. Also, this group of children have experienced many changes in the teachers of English they have had during the last three years.	
Materials used	English lessons in this school are mainly based on using the textbook given by the Ministry of Education and extra material the teacher can find in other course books or internet. However, in this school, teachers do not have access to internet or computers to download material during their planning time. Also, in order to make photocopies or get extra materials teachers have to ask permission and limited number of complementary worksheets are permitted, work is often based on writing on the whiteboard and children copy on their notebooks.	
Level of English	The children have a very limited command of English. It was still hard for the girls to manage basic vocabulary as colours, numbers, vocabulary related	

	to animals, clothes, and parts of the house (especially numbers). They can greet in English and can sing a couple of songs taught by their teachers. Still, especially at the beginning of the intervention children were conducting the activities mainly by the use of signs instead of saying instructions in English.
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This phase was planned to take place from March until June 2015, which corresponds to the first term of the school year in Chile, however, due to time constraints it was delayed from late March until the end of September 2015. This sub-phase was mainly devoted to work with the children, who participated in phase one. The children were involved in doing activities similar to the ones they carried out during phase one, but after the experience collected and the data analysis of phase one some changes were applied and incorporated in Phase two. The main aim of Phase two was to give opportunities for children to reflect about their own English language learning by doing different activities, which would prompt discussion from the participants. Furthermore, a second objective of this phase was to take forward the work done during phase one by the researcher and the children. Some of the activities, which were conducted in phase one, such as information gap/barrier tasks remained in the plan, but some changes were included. For example, fewer barrier activities than the ones conducted during Phase one were planned for each session; meanwhile some new activities were added. These new tasks were designed with the purpose of trying out a wider variety of activities to elicit children's reflection about their own English language learning processes. In this sense, with the purpose of providing more opportunities for children to express their ideas better.

### **3.7 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS AND DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES IN PHASE 2**

In the following sections, the methods of data employed in Phase two will be described underpinning what has been discussed in the literature relevant for these methods.

#### **3.7.1 Interviewing Children**

According to Mann (2010), interviews need to be carried out carefully with consideration given to the interviewees' status and context. The author emphasized the collaborative nature interviews have, where ideas, points of view, details and stories are shared by the interviewer and the interviewee. Therefore, the interview cannot be understood as one interaction in which one person (interviewer) is just asking and listening to the other (interviewee). More importantly, it is

necessary to see the interview as a co-constructed event by all the participants in it. Considering that the main objective of this study was aimed at discovering how children reflect about their English language learning processes, interviews as well as more casual conversations were conducted, since having conversations with the children participating in this study is the most important source of evidence for metacognitive development.

The role of children in research is often left vague, and the idea that children cannot talk for themselves since their opinions cannot always be trusted (Punch, 2002) has been widespread. Indeed, disregarding children's own knowledge about childhood reproduces discourses that are reconstructed, interpreted and spread by dominant adult views (Robinson and Kellet, 2002). During the past decades, there have been great efforts to bridge this gap and give more power and active involvement to children in research. Thus, participatory methods such as the 'Mosaic Approach' (Clarke and Moss, 2001), among others, have been utilized as a way to provide opportunities for children to express themselves more freely and spontaneously as well as to create methods that would be of interest to them. It is of great relevance to discuss the term "child-friendly methods", as these methods seek to elicit children's views in ways that are appealing for them. Although these methods would aim to emulate the observed ways children engage in their social world, according to Punch (2002) the term "child-friendly" does patronize children too. For the purposes of this research, these methods will be called "research participant-centred". In this study, I interviewed children by creating an adaptation of the "*Pots and Beans*" activity employed by O'Kane (2008, p.138). The main purpose of this interview was to get a closer and deeper understanding of how children think about different issues concerning the learning of English. Different topics were discussed in the interviews ranging from my intervention with them as well as learning English inside/outside school context. Originally, this activity consisted of using beans and jars to ascertain children's views about their participation in a project. The children in the research O' Kane conducted, were asked six questions which were stuck on six different pots, in order to elicit the opinion of children in relation to different activities. For each question the children had to answer by putting beans inside the pots. Children would put three beans if they felt they liked the activities a lot and wanted to do more, they would give two beans if they liked the activity, but not a lot, and one bean if they did not like doing the activity at all. For phase two, this activity was hands-on and therefore helped with variety and children were less likely to get bored.

This form of interviewing children was considered an innovative way of eliciting children's opinions. For practical reasons, jars were replaced by small plastic containers. In School 1, the project took place in the library room where the children did the tasks, meanwhile, in School 2 the intervention was conducted in the computer's lab which was the place where we often met. Each

container had numbers, which corresponded to a set of questions the research had written on a piece of paper. For each pot, children received three plastic monkey figures. These toys served to lower anxiety at the beginning of the task; children could play and stretch them, because they were super flexible, which made them more appealing. Children used the monkey plastic figures to express their agreement or disagreement in relation to each question from one to three. For example, I attempted to explain to the children the system of the game by telling them sentences like:

*“If you feel you liked this activity a lot, like you wanted to do more without getting bored, you put in the pot three monkeys. If you feel like you liked it, but not so much, put two, if you feel like you didn’t like it then, put one”.*

Due to the limitations children present to speak English fluently, interviews were fully conducted in Spanish; following the principle stated by Mann (2010, p.p.17) “choices also have to be made in terms of language”. In addition to that, each interview was video recorded and photos of each pot were taken by the children. These interviews followed a semi-structured outline, in which the researcher asked the same questions to the participants, but allowing flexibility and always permitting to change the order of questions. The wording and also the inclusion of supplementary questions according to the key issues that may arise during the dynamic of the interview and the relationship given with each child (Dörnyei, 2007; Nunan, 1992; McKay, 2006; Descombe, 2010) were also taken care of. It is important to mention that the children built a strong relationship of trust and confidence with me, the researcher, during our work in 2014 and our regular meetings, games during break time, lunch together among other activities from March 2015, so they were relaxed and happy to talk in the interviews.

**Figure 2. Adaptation of pots and beans activity (O’Kane, 2008, p.138)**



Examples of prompts employed to conduct the interviews with children

### **3.7.1.1 Prop employed with the children: Glove Puppet**

During Phase one, I brought to every session a glove puppet: a monkey. Since children felt really attracted to the presence of this character, in Phase two, this puppet took more of a leading role by following the work of Kolb (2007). In this sense, the “monkey” (as the children called him) was used to provide the instructions of the tasks as well as to elicit children’s reflection. The monkey was my friend initially and he attended every session. Throughout the meetings children gave him the role of being my son and the monkey often called me mummy. On our first meeting, I told children a story about the monkey. In my story the monkey was introduced as a child who has been bit lazy in England and has not learnt any English even though he lives in an English-speaking country, therefore, when he heard that I was going to Chile to visit the children he asked me if he could join and learn with the children at school. In this sense, I encouraged the children to take part and be involved in helping the monkey to learn English. This character appeared in every material that was designed for this research project such as the reflection cards (figure 4 below), the beans and pots activity (where the beans were replaced by plastic monkey figures) (see figure 2; and in the barrier /information gap activities too (see appendix 2). Moreover, the monkey also appeared in the adaptations of the European Language Portfolio activities (see appendix 3), in which he would ask how he could learn, English better and/or showed strategies for children to follow and discuss.

**Table 5. Summary of Information gap activities conducted per month**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Instructions given</b>	<b>n° of activities</b>	<b>Vocabulary</b>
<b>March</b>	How do you like learning English? Reflection cards	Children look at cards with different strategies to learn English.	1 worksheet	Listen to music, listen, reading a book, using the dictionary, speaking, play, thinking, watching TV
<b>April</b>	Information gap activity (1A)	Cross out	1 worksheet	Tree, dog, flowers, sun, cloud, sun and cloud, window, summer or sun, cloud, girl or mother, kite, ball, house, door, tick,
	Information gap activity (1B)	Cross out	1 worksheet	mom, flower, dog, duck, cat, mother or girl, balloon (meaning ball), kite, mouse, duck, flowers, he/ boy, house, sun, window, sun and cloud, very good, tick and cross out, cloud, door, tree
	Information gap activity (2A & 2B)	2A: Tick 2B: Tick and cross out	2 worksheets	dolly, bag, mother, sun, kite, apple, book, pencil, ruler, crayon, square, crocodile, fish, tick and cross out, teacher, scissors, cupcake, sandwich, burger, diamond, penguin, circle, pencil case, gorilla, triangle, twenty,
<b>May</b>	Information gap activity (2C)	Draw the details	1 worksheet	legs, eyes, hands, mouth, tummy, hands, legs, tail, nose, eyes, ears,
<b>June</b>	Information gap activity (created by children)	Cross out Tick Draw	2 worksheets Per children	cloud, sun, ball, boy, tree, rabbit, dog, cat, mouse, duck, flowers, cross, tick, red, blue, bad, crayon, coat, gorilla, apple, dolphin, fifteen, thirteen, hippo, shoes, ruler, snake, kite, pencil, crocodile, shorts, dolly, tiger, nineteen, circle, sandwich, pencil-case, square, penguin, diamond, fish, hamburger, oval, parrot, cupcake, sun, chef, rectangle, orange juice, twenty, yogurt, scissors, teacher, triangle. Plus: vocabulary added by children
<b>July</b>	Information gap activity (created by children)	Cross out Tick Draw	2 worksheets	cloud, sun, ball, boy, tree, rabbit, dog, cat, mouse, duck, flowers, cross, tick, red, blue, bad, crayon, coat, gorilla, apple, dolphin, fifteen, thirteen, hippo, shoes, ruler, snake, kite, pencil, crocodile, shorts, dolly, tiger, nineteen, circle,



			Per children	sandwich, pencil-case, square, penguin, diamond, fish, hamburger, oval, parrot, cupcake, sun, chef, rectangle, orange juice, twenty, yogurt, scissors, teacher, triangle.  Plus: vocabulary added by children
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<b>August</b>	Information gap activity (created by children)	Cross out Tick Draw	2 worksheets Per children	cloud, sun, ball, boy, tree, rabbit, dog, cat, mouse, duck, flowers, cross, tick, red, blue, bad, crayon, coat, gorilla, apple, dolphin, fifteen, thirteen, hippo, shoes, ruler, snake, kite, pencil, crocodile, shorts, dolly, tiger, nineteen, circle, sandwich, pencil-case, square, penguin, diamond, fish, hamburger, oval, parrot, cupcake, sun, chef, rectangle, orange juice, twenty, yogurt, scissors, teacher, triangle. Plus: vocabulary added by children
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<b>September</b>	Information gap activity (3A) (open instructions activity)	Tick, cross, draw, colour Children do their own instructions	1 worksheet	sun, giraffe, monkey, hippo, tiger, elephant, butterfly, tree, girl, mother, zoo
	Information gap activity (3A)		1 worksheet	girl, drink, sandwiches, biscuits (cookies), cake, crown, piece of cake, candle, boys, chips, cake, happy birthday

**Figure 3. Monkey puppet**



Photo taken by the children of the monkey puppet that was used during the fieldwork

### **3.8. PARTICIPATORY TASKS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITH CHILDREN.**

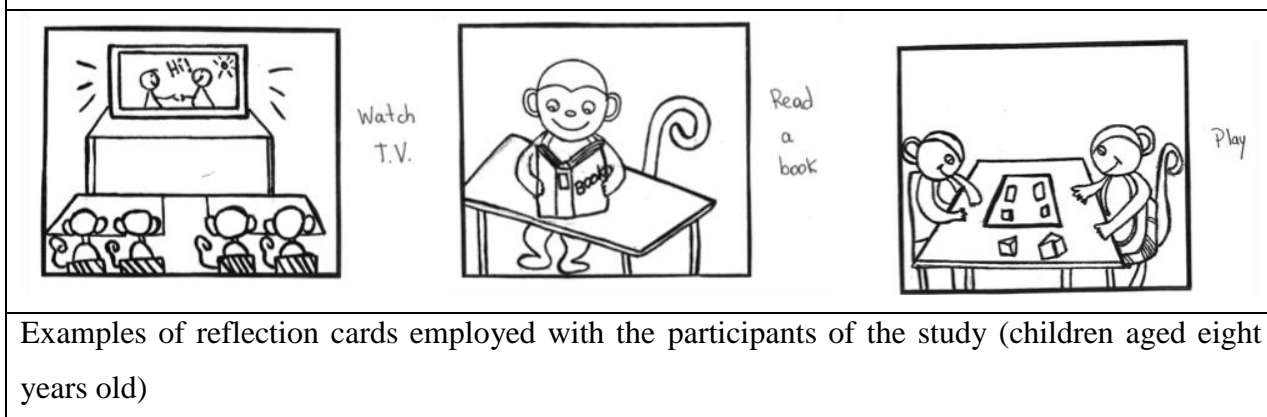
The following sections will describe in detail the different tasks I designed in order to elicit reflection from children about their English language learning. Due to the nature of these tasks and how they were aimed to actively involve children in the research process, these tasks will be framed under the light of “participatory tasks”. Six activities were implemented during phase two. A description of each activity will be given in the section below.

The following activities described below are part of the specific tasks I incorporated after conducting Phase one.

#### **3.8.1. How do you like learning English? (reflection cards activity)**

This task is an adaptation from an activity used by Kolb (2007). Its main aim was to foster ways of reflecting children’s language learning experiences, in which children were asked to rank learning activities according to their preferences and the importance they attributed to each strategy when learning English. For the specific purpose of this research study, the original drawings employed by Kolb were replaced by pictures of monkeys similar to the puppet the children met at each session. The monkey is doing nine different activities to learn English such as: listening to music, using a computer, using a dictionary, listening, speaking, thinking, watching T.V, reading a book and playing (the actual cards can be found on figure 4, p. 72). Different from what Kolb (2007) employed in her research, for this study the drawings were not presented in a worksheet format, but they were introduced to children as nine different A5 laminated cards. These cards were distributed on a table, in groups children went through each card and I asked them questions like: *When you learn English what activities are more important to you?* This activity aimed to listen to the children through talking; discussing and it also provided opportunities for children to express their preferred strategies to learn English. Moreover, another underlying objective of this task was to unveil how children can reflect about their own English language learning processes and at the same time elicit what they think in relation to the strategies girls observed in the cards.

**Figure 4. Reflection Cards**



### **3.8.2. Adaptation of European Language Portfolio activities**

These activities were aimed to incorporate tasks that had explicitly been designed to ask children to reflect about the ways, tools and strategies they use to learn foreign languages. Since the context for what these activities had been planned differ from the Chilean context, it was necessary to adapt them in order to make the activities suitable and more meaningful for children learning English within the Chilean reality. Therefore, the activities described below still preserved the main objective of the study, which was to elicit reflection from children about their English language learning processes.

#### **3.8.2.1 Task 1: How can we improve our English?**

This activity was employed as a complementary prompt to elicit children's responses about ways/strategies of how they learn English. At the same time, the main purpose of this task was to give children some choice in the tools employed to elicit their ideas and also to provide opportunities for children to speak more freely (rather than asking questions at the end of the activities). This activity proceeded as follows:

- 1) I started by telling the story of the monkey who really wants to learn English, but he is not really sure of how to do it properly.
- 2) The children discussed around questions like:
  - *Why do you think English is an important language for the monkey (you / your classmates) to learn?*
  - *How do you think the monkey (you/ your classmates) can improve his (your/their) way of learning English?*

- 3) In order to suggest ideas and guide better the reflection stage, I brought a big cardboard with a bright background colour and with a picture of the monkey in the middle.
- 4) I asked children to brainstorm ideas on how they and their classmates/friends would do to learn English better.
- 5) I brought different envelopes with pictures that represent some of the most common activities/strategies often done/used to learn English (read stories, look up the dictionary, speak, listening to music, translate)
- 6) Children picked and chose envelopes. I attempted to encourage children to express what they think about the pictures found inside each envelope. In School 1, three children participated and in School 2 six children participated in this activity.
- 7) After discovering every picture (strategy) behind all the envelopes, in groups children chose the ones they preferred and thought would help the monkey to learn English better. I encouraged children to provide reasons why they chose those strategies. The children together stuck the drawings in the poster (for pictures of the drawings, see appendix 3)
- 8) Children drew the activity they thought it would be a good way to learn English. In School 1, children had time to explain how people could learn English in their drawings. In School 2 was not possible to do this, because of time issue, however, I kept the drawings.

### **3.8.2.2 Task 2: What do you enjoy best? (when learning English)**

After children had been working in different kinds of activities for almost three months this new activity aimed at eliciting the opinions, impressions and ideas that children have about what they have been enjoying the most when learning English. The objective for this task aimed to go beyond asking children about what they have been doing during the intervention so far, at the same time; it included what children enjoy the most of their regular English lessons at school with their teacher. During this activity the monkey told children that he had been learning English and that “happily” he had been using the help and the tips the children gave him on the task mentioned before to improve his learning, he was very thankful and happy, therefore, he wanted to share with them the fact that there are some activities he liked more than others. The monkey asked the children: *what do you enjoy best when you learn English?* The children were given time to talk about their opinions. In groups, I gave children three pieces of paper numbered from one to three. Initially children were asked to choose together as a group three activities they enjoy the most when learning English, however, it was very hard to make children choose in groups that I had to ask children to make their choices individually. In the pieces of paper, I provided, children did

drawings of the activities/strategies they enjoy the most. After they finished drawing and colouring, they stuck their drawings in order of preference on a cardboard. Children provided reasons why they chose the activity/strategy and also why number one was chosen as their favourite and so on.

For a full summary of the activities conducted of both Phase one and Phase two, please see Table 7 below.

**Table 7. Summary of general procedures of Phase one and Phase two**

		<b>PHASE I</b>	<b>PHASE II</b>
<b>Duration</b>		April-end of May 2014 (two months)	March-October 2015 (eight months)
<b>Sessions</b>		Five sessions planned	Fifty sessions conducted in both school (approximately 25 on each school)
<b>Participants</b>		Ten girls aged seven years old from two different schools participated on the pilot study.  Four girls from School 1 and six girls from School 2.	The same participants from School 1 and School were invited to participate on the study. For the main study nine girls were the target group.
<b>Setting</b>		Phase 1 was conducted in two schools: -School 1 -School 2	Phase 2 was conducted on the same two schools
<b>Data Collection procedures</b>	Tasks	Three per session	Fewer tasks. Two or one per session
	Observations	Each session with the pairs was recorded from the beginning to the end, without stopping the camera recording.	The procedures to observe the children will remain the same as the pilot study.
	Interviews	No interviews were conducted in phase one.	Children were interviewed in phase two.
	Techniques to elicit children's reflection	Asking children questions like:  - How do you feel now after doing these tasks? - Do you remember what happened the first time you did it?	Asking children similar questions to the ones asked during the pilot study. In the main study additional tasks were incorporated in order to elicit children's reflection about their learning processes.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Has it improved? How?</li> <li>- What helped you to get it right this time?</li> <li>- What would help you to get it right?</li> <li>- What can you do to make it better?</li> </ul> <p>These questions were asked after doing the first and the last task in each session.</p>	<p>Tasks:</p> <p>Cards: How do children learn English?</p> <p>Adaptation of activities taken from the European Language Portfolio</p> <p>Information gap tasks</p> <p>Use of a puppet: The monkey glove puppet presented to the children during the pilot study played a more salient role during the main study. The monkey asked the questions during the reflection stage and appeared in the data collection materials.</p>
	Fieldnotes	<p>The researcher took notes after each time a session with the children was conducted. The diary kept notes from the work done on both schools, including the name of the children, the date, the time when the session was held, the tasks done and then the reflection part was developed.</p>	<p>During the main study, the researcher kept fieldnotes rather than keeping a diary.</p>

### **3.9 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS**

Qualitative research opens different opportunities for researchers to delve into a wide variety of dimensions of the social world by including aspects of everyday life as well as the understandings, experiences and the imaginary of the research participants. At the same time, it regards the importance of the context, social processes, and institutions, underlying discourses and how these aspects construct meaning. Indeed, qualitative research seeks to explore deeply underlying arguments about occurring situations in particular contexts, due to its nature of constantly attempting to connect explanations with the surrounding context of the research study (Mason, 2011). According to Cohen, et. al (2007) qualitative data analysis entails organizing and explaining data by making sense of them, in terms of the definitions and perceptions by participants about a certain situation, and by noting patterns, themes, categories and commonalities within or across the data. Data analysis therefore, does not represent an easy process, since there are no simple or correct ways to analyse and present data. In fact, qualitative data analysis seeks to *fit the data for purpose*. Thus, it is a process that heavily relies on interpretations held by the researcher based on what the participants say. Objectives on what is aimed to be searched should be in line with the kind of analysis conducted as well as the results will be written. Moreover, different factors such as the kind of research undertaken, the number of data sets, the number of participants and the kind of data that have been collected, among others would influence which framework or approach towards analysing data one would choose or feel more inclined to follow.

### **3.10 DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES IN PHASE ONE AND PHASE TWO**

#### **3.10.1 Preliminary data analysis of Phase 1**

After arriving from phase one in June 2014, the process of analysing the data I gathered after being a month and a half in Chile working in two different schools started. Firstly, I chose to pay closer attention to only one school (school 1) due to time issues. My first approach to analyse the data implied watching all the videos I collected from school 1 and divide videos recorded during each session into each pair that participated in Phase two (three pairs in total in school 1). Later, I attempted to transcribe interactions that would illustrate how children responded to the questions asked during the reflection stage and at the same time include phrases or spontaneous reactions that naturally came from the children in order to demonstrate their engagement with the project, which were presented as preliminary findings. In order to get closer to the data obtained from

Phase one, I started to get familiar with the process of qualitatively analysing data collected from videos. This process of data analysis was based on thematic coding the work I have done on gathering data from ten children aged seven years old, during April and May 2014. Children worked in pairs on a set of repetitive activities.

The thematic analysis presented was taken from the recordings I videotaped during the data collection period and comprises one recording per session with each pair, leading to a total number of thirty to thirty five videos approximately. Firstly, the analysis was divided into the five sessions that phase one was conducted. With the purpose of embracing the events that took place on each session, the analysis was divided into two layers for each session. The first layer attempted to describe how children performed the activities. This description compared the differences and similarities in terms of how children in both schools engaged and conducted the repetitive tasks. Aspects regarding the level of English children had, was considered of great importance as well as how they engaged on the activities. As a way to support the analysis quotes taken from the children were also included. The second layer was dedicated to pay specific attention to the reflection stage, where the researcher asked questions about the tasks around a set of fixed questions. The emergent themes were chosen after watching the videos and capturing recurrent topics mentioned by the children. Quotes were also included as a way to support the themes. A summary of the recurrent themes and a description of the codes for Phase one can be found on the following table:

**Table 7. Summary of Categories and codes**

CATEGORIES	CODES	DESCRIPTION
Activities References to different aspects of the activities done by the children	Activities are fun	Refers to the comments children made when they thought they liked the activities
	Innovative activity	Children mentioned that the activities are new for them, because it is something they have not done in the past
Difficulties	Difficulties faced when doing the activities	This node is related to the any problem children came across when performing the activities such as forgetting the instructions, forgetting the words, too many instructions, etc.
	Difficulty of the task on the first attempt	The feelings children have in relation to how difficult was to do the activity at the beginning of the whole session
Tasks	Discriminating between two elements	It refers to the strategies children used to give instructions when there were more than one of the same element in their worksheet
	Following instructions	This code refers to the chances where children realised that they were following instructions instead of "guessing"



	New drawings	This node refers to those moments when children said that having new drawings make the activity more appealing to them
	Own drawings	This node refers to those moments when children said that having new drawings make the activity more appealing to them
	Peer assistance	Episodes when the children express that while doing the activities, they received help from their partners in order to do the activities.
<p>Feelings about the project</p> <p>This code is related to the feelings children have about the project. The ideas they had when they were invited, the things their parents told them and their previous/current/expectations</p>	Happiness	While doing the activities the participants experienced a sense of feeling "happy"
	Nervousness	Children expressed that they were feeling a bit nervous while doing the activities for different reasons like: not knowing the name of the elements, new instructions, etc.
	Glove puppet company	Instances where the children mentioned that they enjoy the company of the monkey glove puppet
	Sense of progress	Instances where children discuss how they feel they have been improving (not improving) after they have done the activity more times
	New words and instructions have been learned	It mainly refers to the aspects children perceived that has been learned from the first time they did the activity to the last one
	Repetition providing a sense of successful knowledge	It mainly refers to how children mentioned that after doing the tasks several times, it is easier to recognise the vocabulary
	Willingness to do more activities	Children expressing their own desires to do more of the games
	Chances for choosing	This node refers to all those instances where children are given opportunities for them to choose while doing the activities
<p>Eliciting information from the children</p> <p>This node refers to those moments on the sessions when the researcher tries to elicit instructions or general information about the activities from the children instead of the researcher giving the instructions herself</p>	Suggested ways of making the activities better	This node is mainly related to the suggestions children provide according to how they think the instructions can be given better or any improvement they would add
	Ways of improving performance	Children express the ways they think the performance in the activities done can be improved
	Ways of making myself understood	Children explain how they can told the partner the instructions when they don't know how to say the word in English

Since the nature of phase one was essentially exploratory, no specific research questions were asked before going to the field for conducting phase one, however, I kept a main broad question in my mind which lead me to explore: *to what extent children can reflect about their*

*language learning processes?* Therefore, phase one was framed under an inductive approach, in which the main purpose of collecting this data was not to test a particular hypothesis, but to explore the field and discover emergent and common ideas, perceptions or topics coming from the participants of the study (Thomas, 2003) in this case, children aged seven years old. Furthermore, the objective of conducting phase one was mainly to explore the bigger picture of phase one in terms of how appropriate and engaging the tasks I designed would be for the children as well as how suitable they will for fostering their reflection too. Moreover, another underlying aim was to discover to what extent children aged seven years old would reflect on their language learning.

Keeping these objectives in mind, I decided to look at the data holistically and in this sense, include within the data analysis not only those aspects concerning metacognitive skills and reflection, but also the opinion children had about the tasks. An additional important aspect that was not the aim of the study but provided complementary information about the research was the proficiency in English the participants of the study when performing the tasks.

### **3.10.2 Data analysis process of data gathered from Phase two**

After analysing the data from Phase one, changes were included in the plan of the fieldwork I conducted from March 2015, and therefore some of the aspects that were tried during the data analysis of phase one needed to be changed too. Firstly, due to the great amount and the diversity of the data collected during Phase one (almost eight months of data, that is to say from March to October 2015), therefore more videos will be analysed too, as 52 videos lasting approximately one hour each, new decisions were needed to be made.

The first step of data analysis encountered after coming back from the fieldwork consisted on auditing all the videos that were collected in order to see, discover and organize what was done and what kind of data was collected. This process was carried out with the purpose of having a general but at the same time detailed picture of the data gathered in order to see according to the data and the events that took place during the fieldwork what kind of data analysis could be best conducted or even which bits of the data would be devoted greater focus.

This process was carried out by me watching all the videos I collected, divide them into each sessions and in each session define which events took place for example: session, events, time, and outcomes were listed in a table.

After watching the videos and listing all the events that happened on each session into a table three additional aspects were incorporated into the same table. These aspects were: who interacted in each event, what type of interaction took place (child-child; child-monkey; child-

researcher; children-researcher) in each event. Additionally, a list of the vocabulary items reviewed on each activity, plus the outcomes of each session, when applicable, were included too. Moreover, a standard wording was employed for naming each event and later they were colour-coding and they were merged into main categories and codes.

### **3.11 INDUCTIVE QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS**

By following the same approach, I employed to look at the data during phase one, I started to look at the data inductively. For phase two, my scope became narrower and the main aim is to search and explore different ways of how children show knowledge and awareness and how they may reflect of their English learning processes in and out of their school context, as well as, gathering their opinions, ideas and feelings of how English is taught to them.

Inductive data analysis of the data seeks to find patters of commonalities as well as unusual or deviant cases among the data, by helping to code different segments within texts (Cohen, et. al. 2006). Moreover, inductive analysis serves for comprising big amounts of data as this study as well as to find links and patterns (Thomas, 2003). Inductive analysis is also known as a more “bottom approach” in which assumptions or theoretical constructs are elaborated from participants’ utterances rather than confirming hypothesis or testing theories. The data analysis of the main study will attempt to discover for example if spending more time in the field may be possible that children talked more, participated more in the activities, had more ideas, were more eager to participate in the project. Indeed, children by the end of the project they were more interested in doing and creating material that would help them/or their classmates learn English, which can be demonstrated by children concrete examples of children creating their own material.

### **3.12 VIDEO RECORDED DATA**

Following the procedure adopted in phase one each pair was recorded while performing the tasks. The camera was turned on, as soon as the girls entered into the setting, where the activities were conducted. The purpose of keeping a record was mainly oriented to catching any spontaneous reactions that emerged from the simple interaction among the participants, the researcher and the context rather than with a view to analyse the task performances. Since the presence of the camera would be a bit disturbing for the participants, during the first day of the project the girls were invited to get familiar with the camera again. The camera used for phase one the same as the one

for the main study, which is a very small device that looks like a phone. Since, there were 26 hours worth of data recorded; these were all uploaded onto a secure online cloud.

### **3.12. 1 Data selection in Video research**

In qualitative research studies, especially in research studies that gather a big amount of data, as the study presented here, data selection becomes a major issue. According to Goldman et.al (2007) data selection corresponds to the process of concentrating on particular aspects or information of the research study, which should be in alignment with the research questions, theoretical frameworks and the instruments employed to collect data by the researcher. The authors suggest that this decision can be made before, during or after the data has been collected, depending on the scope of the research and the interests of the researcher. In the case of this study, each session with the children was fully recorded, regardless of the focus of this research, therefore, data will be selected with the purpose of directing the analysis towards those events in which reflection from children about their own English language learning took place. All videos were analysed, but special focus was put on the events in which children talk and reflect about their learning. In the following sections, discussions on more specific details of how the data was analysed and presented.

### **3.13 THEMATIC ANALYSIS**

According to Silverman (2014) qualitative thematic analysis seeks to delve into the lives of the participants involved in the research in relation to what they say, and by considering at the same time peculiarities of situations underpinning the research. Thematic analysis permits to give voice to the point of view of the participants rather than from the interpretations raised by researchers alone. Moreover, Silverman (2014) states that data in thematic analysis is often presented as interpretations of social practices, which claims are supported by using elucidative quotations from participants. In addition to that, since themes are of central importance for thematic analysis, it is important to clarify what is understood by a theme. According to Bazely (2013, pp. 190), themes are best defined as “an integrating, relational statement derived from the data that identifies both content and meaning”. Due to the benefits provided by thematic analysis such as being a more flexible method to analyse qualitative data, in comparison with other methods like conversation analysis, phenomenological data analysis or narrative analysis, thematic analysis allows researchers to use it within different qualitative data analysis frameworks when appropriate (Braun

and Clarke, 2006), hence this method has been widely used and spread in the qualitative researchers' community. In spite of this trend, thematic analysis has been under researched and little has been said and investigated in relation to the strength of the analysis in terms of how the outcome of the analysis is thorough, contextualized and incorporated understanding as well as its deployment of the theoretical models found (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Additionally, a strong argument should emerge from the data, which would allow the researcher to draw consistent conclusions (Bazeley, 2013). In order to address the issue of formal encounters towards thematic analysis, two different approaches and steps that were used as a way guide the analysis process proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) and Bazeley, (2013). These steps proposed by the researchers will be considered and followed when doing the thematic analysis of the data gathered in Phase 2. Bazeley, (2013) was a more updated version, which served better to this study. Table 9 below summarises the steps that were employed during the research analysis of this study.

**Table 9. Strategies for approaching thematic analysis**

If you become aware of a pattern or trend (a theme) while you are reading or working through your data, note it in analytic memo supported by whatever prompted the awareness, and then ensure that your coding or alternative recording system will capture necessary information to test its generality across the data.
Cut out (physically or electronically) exemplar quotes or expressions and arrange these into piles of things that go together. Name the piles to generate themes. If you have other people doing sorting, have them "think aloud", and tape them as they work to see what criteria they are using.
Develop assertions based on what you are seeing in your data (then seek to test their validity)
Note repetitive or patterned relationships between identified elements in the data
Create thematic connections based on the relationship between a set of conditions, actions/interactions, and consequences
Write a vignette about a particular aspect of your data, and then create a summary

Taken from: Bazeley, (2013, p.p 192). Qualitative Data Analysis. Practical Strategies.

This study follows an inductive approach to analyse data. All the videos I recorded were 26 hours worth of recording data. Due to the long hours recorded, I decided to focus only on those episodes that devoted to talking and reflecting about English learning. Furthermore, themes chosen were data driven, rather than strictly meeting specific questions or theoretical constructs guiding the researcher, but seeks to analyse data more freely by not trying to fit a certain coding framework or prove assumptions asserted by the researcher. An important aspect of thematic analysis involves

raising codes and categories extracted from the data. The following section will be devoted to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how categories and coding can be articulated within thematic analysis.

### **3.14 CATEGORIES AND CODING**

Coding is a technique with an old tradition, which finds its roots in grounded theory (Glass and Strauss, 1967). In qualitative research codes are used to demonstrate what is discussed in a specific piece of text. Often, codes help to go back to segments, which can be grouped, into the different thematic value they contain (Gläser and Laudel, 2013).

According to Silverman (2010) the process of raising categories and assigning codes to data will be guided by the research questions formulated for the study. Moreover, in qualitative research coding involves actions of retaining data rather than reducing it as in quantitative research (Richards, 2009). According to Richards (2009) the main objective of coding data is to learn from it as much as it is possible by constantly revisiting data excerpts until the researcher is able to understand common thematic patterns and different interactions among participants. However, the author states that coding is a complex process that goes beyond labelling bits of documents in relation to a certain topic or theme, instead, it urges researchers to bridge those labels or common patterns in order to review them and allow further thinking on the topics or themes developed. According to Richards (2009) Coding can be done in three different ways:

- 1) Descriptive: mainly refers to list information and attributes related to the participants.
- 2) Topic: mainly refers to topics or themes contained in the raw data
- 3) Analytical: mainly refers to coding that derives from interpretation and reflection of meaning embedded on data reflected on a particular codes.

Descriptive coding will include attributes related with the children such as their age, school year, number and hours of English lessons a week and school. Analytical coding will complement, strengthen and deepen the thematic analysis. Thomas (2003, p. 5) proposed five procedures for coding in inductive qualitative data analysis. These procedures are described below:

1. Preparation of “raw” data files
2. Close reading of texts
3. Creation of categories

4. Overlapping coded and uncoded text
5. Continuing revision and refinement of category system

At the same time, information gathered from the literature that inform the data analysis process as well as any additional events occurring that would be of relevance for the data analysis process would be included in the memos too.

### **3.15 TRANSCRIBING DATA**

Transcripts “usually refer to a distinctive genre associated with natural occurring talk – for example a job interview, a conversation at a dinner table- into writing” (Bezemer and Mavers, 2011, p.2). As it was stated above, video selection represents an important decision a researcher should make. One of the factors that intervened into that decision is the process of transcription. Transcribing is a process that should not be underestimated; indeed, as Jackson (2001) states it does take a great amount of time (time-consuming), effort and energy from the researcher. At the same time, transcriptions are of great relevance in qualitative research. Firstly, it would be impossible for the human brain to recall everything that is said in a conversation as well as remembering aspects of a conversation such as laughter, pauses, overlaps, among others. Furthermore, transcripts represent an available public record for scientist to have access to, different from fieldnotes, for instance. One of the benefits of transcribing is that they can be improved, replayed while they can be analysed and addressed from different perspectives by different researchers (Silverman, 2010). According to Richards (2009) there are certain standards that need to be regarded when working with transcriptions. First of all, for the purposes of this research study I will not ask external people to transcribe, therefore, I will be involved in the whole process. Moreover, as it was discussed above the video recordings were not fully transcribed due to time constraints, instead, those events where reflection takes place were verbatim transcribed.

With the great expansion of video recording in social research, transcription conventions have raised methodological issues and questions on how multimodal transcriptions would accurately tackle gestures, gaze and non-verbal interactions, how these features of language should be transcribed and how those transcriptions relate to speech and transcription of spoken data (Bezemer and Mavers, 2011). When transcribing, researchers are challenged not only in being accurate in representing both verbal and non-verbal interactions, but at the same time attempts to be made in order to incorporate a sense “reality” into the transcription process too by including hesitations, false starts and pauses, (Bezemer and Mavers, 2011). Regarding this study, I employed

video data to analyse how children performed different activities aimed to elicit in varied ways how they reflect about their English language learning and at the same time, attempting to explore deeply into the strategies and activities that children think could be done by them or other children to learn English better. By following the objectives of the study, transcriptions, at the same time are aimed to graphically illustrate how children express their thoughts, ideas and how they reflect about their English language learning while conducting different the tasks mentioned above (for more information about the tasks go to section 3.8 in Chapter III). Thus, in these transcripts verbal and paralinguistic aspects of the interaction among participants will be included, such as people speaking, body language, signs, gestures and pauses. Verbatim transcriptions of those moments when children reflect about the process of English language learning will be used. In addition to that, it is important to point out that interactions and conversation among children and me were carried out mainly in Spanish, which is the language spoken in Chile, therefore, transcriptions will be undertaken in the language of origin. Furthermore, the first stages of analysis will be carried out by using those transcripts in Spanish, and in a later stage of the data analysis, relevant quotes and interactions will be translated into English in order to be inserted in the Data Analysis chapter of the final thesis. These translations were done by the researcher and then cross -checked with another speaker of English and Spanish. Furthermore, the transcription process for this study can be complemented by the use of pictorial illustrations (Plowman and Stephen, 2008). By including images captured from the videos that were recorded during fieldwork it would be possible to demonstrate better non-verbal interaction. Thus, this representation of interaction would enable me as the researcher in charge of the analysis to provide a more detailed analysis compared to the one offered by standard transcription. After finishing transcribing the data gathered, those transcriptions will be used for conducting a thematic analysis.



### 3. 16 SECTION ON REFLEXIVITY, MACRO AND MICRO ETHICS INTERRELATIONS IN THIS STUDY

#### 3.16.1 Macroethics

As Kubanyiova (2008) states there are three essential principles underlying the macro ethics of any research study. These principles are: 1) *respect for persons*, in which the researcher will always protect the participants' wellbeing and will attempt to reduce risks for harm at all times. In the case of this study, I had to go through a long process of asking for consent from each figure of authority in the school before actually working with the children who always had the chance to withdraw as whenever it was desired. 2) *Beneficence* which is understood as the substantial benefit gained while reducing harm to the minimum. In the case of this study, a way to compensate for the interruption that the project means to the school's schedule I aligned the material and the contents of vocabulary used in the tasks with the contents they were covering in their regular lessons. I respected the school's routine too and adapted my schedule according to their own availability. As Kubanyiouva (2008) states *macroethical* conventions might not fit the reality required in a particular context. For instance, in the Chilean context there is no clearance asked for people to enter a school, and issues of access are complex because of the bureaucracy of the process rather than because of being a rigid process to protect children. Therefore, this required extra explanations from me to each member of the school community in order to inform them about the process of gaining consent.

The interactions and discrepancies as a product of the interactions of *macroethics* and *microethics* began with the ethical approval processes that are needed to be completed by the educational institution. In order to complete that step, I applied and obtained ethical approval by the Centre of Applied Linguistics of the University of Warwick. This procedure was requested before conducting the study in Chile. In addition to this, consent forms were signed by the participants who agreed on being part of the study. Firstly, a consent form was requested from the headmistress, asking her approval to conduct the study in the school. Secondly, an information note about the project was sent to the parents of the girls participating in the study. This note was followed by a consent form, where the parents gave permission for their daughters to take part in the study; the consent forms were sent back to the school, where I collected and kept them. Thirdly, after obtaining consent from the parents, before starting each session, the girls were asked to complete a consent form specifically designed for children, where they personally agreed on participating in the project as well as being recorded. The process just described was already

undertaken during the data collection of Phase one. Approval from the Centre of Applied Linguistics was unproblematically granted. Therefore, the same measures and procedures during Phase one were taken.

The longitudinal nature of this study provided a wide range of experiences for me and for the children. In order to meet the expectations and objectives I had for this research study, unintentionally, I saw myself observing and learning many other interesting issues. Working for an extended period of time in the field opened the possibilities for me to develop a broader understanding of other elements that also affected and influenced the way the research was shaped and developed. In the following sections, I will discuss the *microchallenges* present in this study.

### **3.16.2 Negotiating access**

The researcher has to negotiate entry into the research site; often as a *participant observer* (Richards, 2003) a role in which the researcher undertakes work in the setting and at the same time gathers data (performing a determined role while collecting data). Even though one of the advantages of second phase was the fact that I already knew the girls, while conducting Phase one and then implementing the second phase of this study I faced many challenges in relation to conducting research with the children.

For me, obtaining access to the schools was facilitated because I was a teacher of English at primary school in Chile; therefore, I contacted close people I knew that could give me permission to have access, space and time to carry out the project. Indeed, I received a lot of help from friends, who are teachers, my former supervisor at school and from people in charge in the Ministry of Education in Chile. In addition to this, I was familiar with the Chilean context of teaching English at the primary school level. In spite of my privileged position, I encountered many others issues even after access was granted. More specifically I was challenged by underlying issues related to time, internal administrative process and steps required by the schools, obtaining consents from parents among others constraints. I will attempt to briefly discuss the *microchallenges* underlying the study in terms of the methodological and ethical aspects of this study I experienced while I was conducting my fieldwork. In the following sub-sections I will explain the processes of obtaining consents from parents and from children.

### **3.16.3 Dealing with consent: ethical forms**

For Phase one, I prepared letters informing the Headmistress and the Headmaster of each school about the project. After having meetings with them they signed consents forms where I included a short letter describing the objective of the research with my contact information in case they wanted to ask me further questions. Later, I also wrote information leaflets to parents of the children informing them about the project and I attached a consent form for each parent, where they could indicate if they granted permission or not for their children to participate in the project (for further information on the consent forms please see appendices 5). After receiving permission children also were asked to sign consent form (attached in appendix 5.1). The same procedure was employed during Phase two. This was really useful since what was experienced the former year children were familiar with a process that is not common in Chile.

### **3.16.4 Dealing with children's consent**

Having this step last in all the process of gaining consent, I devoted a lot of time and also care to explain and talk with the children about the meaning of consent. Before using the consent forms, I piloted what I had designed with another pair of children. The observations I gathered from piloting the consent form implied making amendments and changes in order to make them comprehensible and friendly for the children. In addition to that, I developed activities to help each pair to understand what a consent form was. Moreover, miming and acting out were integrated as ways to that facilitate more active involvement from the children were also addressed. Indeed, I decided to schedule and dedicate the first session of Phase one and two to get the girls to feel familiar with the process of signing a consent form. Lastly, I would like to point out the fact that I managed to see and meet the group of girls after almost a month trying to get all the ethical process done appropriately. Examples of the consent forms I employed with the children can be found in appendix 5.2.

### **3.16.5 Obtaining consent from parents**

Firstly, I will open this discussion by explaining the intricacies behind this process. After having a meeting with the headmistress and headmaster of each school, informing the teacher of each class, I asked parents if they would give permission for their children to participate in the research study. In order to comply with this policy, I created and distributed an information letter in Spanish

to each parent (see appendix 5.2; parents' consent forms). In this letter, I explained all of the relevant information about the study, its purpose and the level of involvement of the children. Personal details like my e-mail and phone number were provided in the same letter for the sake of parents looking for more information about the project and me.

The second phase of this project was conducted with the same group of children I worked with in 2014 during Phase one. Surprisingly, in the case of the group from School 2, one of the mothers of the children that worked with me in phase one did not allow her daughter to participate in Phase two next year (2015) because she saw her daughter's participation in the project as a waste of time that would take time off from her regular timetable at school. I respected her decision, but the problem with this I found was that the child really wanted to participate in the project and every time I had to see her sad little face telling me, "*miss, please take me!*" I felt conflicted. Although that girl and I wanted to work together, I could not do it, because it was part of ethical decisions made when asking consent with underage children. It really broke my heart, but at the same time, in spite of the experience I discovered that the decisions parents do not always follow, respect children's opinions, instead sometimes parents ignore what their children have expressed. Since I had to follow what the parent of this child decided, I had to have a conversation with the girl and explained to her what happened. The conversation was not enough and she kept asking me why I could not take her every time I went to school. Challenges presented by parents represent an often ignored issue in the field of conducting research with children, which cannot be isolated from their role in the access researchers can have in order to work with young learners.

### **3.17 PRACTICAL CONSTRAINTS**

#### **3.17.1 Considerations Regarding Video Research**

In spite of the great advantages the recording of the sessions brought in the process of data analysis, working with technology adds another challenge to the study. It is important to consider that conducting video research means having to carry with you a camera and a tripod. In order to address any problem with the camera I also brought with me a mini Ipad, my phone and an additional iPhone to record in case none of the recording devices could work. Even though they could sound as an exaggeration of being extremely careful, I would like to say that in some sessions I used them all, because technology itself cannot be blindly trusted. Additionally, conducting video research for a long period of time as in my case meant storing large files of videos for a long time in my computer. I had to expand the internal memory of my computer and pay for a private cloud

to safely store every session I recorded. Lastly, strict steps must be followed in order to successfully manage large sets of data. From my own experience, I could recommend that the following steps should be considered while conducting the research such as 1) having enough memory storage in your camera 2) always charge the camera 3) record 4) save the recording/s right after coming back from the field 5) find a consistent method of naming each session each participant and each school 6) never forget to add exact dates and time if necessary, therefore keeping a steady and strict way some of the storing would avoid issues of forgetting relevant information that may be needed in the future.

### **3.17.2 Unexpected Events or Special Days in the Schools**

In respect to my research experience, while conducting phase one and phase two of this study, I always had to deal with the issue of surprise. In many occasions I had to re-arrange the sessions or my visits because there was something going on in the school, especially extra-curricular activities, special tests, teachers' strike, demonstrations in Chile, and even an earthquake in the central zone of Chile. In this sense, unexpected events greatly influenced the smooth progress of this study. In Chile first periods in school are often used to celebrate or commemorate any special day. Many of the celebrations include celebrating the day of the Chilean flag, the Mapuche New Year (We Tripantu), sports, games or special events within the school like poetry or dance competition. For example, in School 1, on Mondays children had English lesson in the first period. This particular lesson was often interrupted by a special event organized in the school. Therefore, it was not possible to schedule sessions on that day because usually the event took longer and then only fifteen or twenty minutes of the lesson was left. Due to the dynamic of schools, I had to delete Mondays from my research plan and instead dedicated Mondays to pilot the activities for each week where I could meet the girls after the activity. In addition to the effect that unexpected events had in how this research study was shaped, natural issues that are part of Chile's geography. Chile is a country that is characterized by having very strong earthquakes and natural disasters. Indeed, totally unexpected such an earthquake on September, heavy rain during Winter and bank holidays and school vacations after each term made it difficult to keep an organised and steady schedule.

Chile is a country where students and teachers are very political. Demonstrations, protests and strikes are held in order to show the discontent with the government and their policies. For instance, while I was conducting the second phase in 2015, many teachers, schools and universities were on strike and organized many demonstrations. Teachers who were on strike perceived lower income during this time. After three or four months on strikes, the teachers revise the propositions

from the government, deliberated and decided to end the strike after months of negotiation. This particular event spread across the country had direct consequences in the realization of the work I attempted to work with the teachers. Firstly, teachers are always tired and swamped with work. Secondly, after coming back from the strike teachers had even more responsibilities and to even work on Saturdays in order to recover the time spent on the strike, therefore, teachers did not have much time or space left for implementing a project. Thirdly, the workshops were disseminated by Chilean Ministry of Education, which provoked suspicion and rejection from some teachers of English and reduced the level of participation from teachers. This also had an impact on the work I conducted with the children, because some sessions were suddenly cancelled when teachers of school 1 and school 2 decided to join the strike on national teachers' strike, for instance.

### **3.17.3 Time Issues (travelling to Puente Alto and Pudahuel)**

Researching difficult educational realities in Santiago often implies visiting schools that are located far from the city and it usually takes hours to get there. Therefore, difficulties with time and travel became quite important. As I had written in my research journal (entry 4/ 25/04/18) I often struggled to manage to stay on time and to travel from the city centre to the extreme north and southern areas of Santiago four days a week. At same the time these long trips often made on public buses and the underground often made me end up spending money on taxis to get to schools faster. All of these efforts did take a lot of physical effort besides the pressures of conducting the research. According to school's schedules lessons start at eight in the morning which meant that I had to wake up very early and then travel at rush hour from one side of the city to the very outskirts of the South and North part of Santiago.

Every session I conducted in each school and work with only one group per day took around one hour and half, considering walking distances, commuting on the underground, taxis, public transportation, adds to the difficulties of conducting research with underprivileged groups of the Chilean society. It is also important to mention that usually in vulnerable contexts the delinquency rate is also higher, thus to work in the outskirts of the city becomes quite challenging and risky.

### **3.17.4 Budget**

In regards to how long fieldworks are funded, I strongly believe that this is one of the most overlooked issues when talking about conducting fieldwork. Adopting a bottom-up approach and carry out a longitudinal research presented challenges too in the study. My Ph.D was funded by a scholarship I was granted by the Chilean government, therefore, I had to be very organised in order to keep my finances steady since we are often dependent on a tight budget and to be able to pay plane tickets, rent a place, buy materials and photocopies. In addition to this, it is important to mention that a big part of using participatory methods of data collection when researching young children also implies using a wide range of extra materials such as toys, books, arts and crafts, big pieces of cardboard, sketch books, pencil colours, crayons, glue, the monkey puppet besides the camera recorder, the tripod, etc. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind and consider these issues before going to the field. Lastly, I would like to mention that it is necessary to start including extra funds and scholarships for conducting longer fieldworks and research within the field of social sciences. Counting with sufficient funds impacts greatly in providing better materials and allow young researchers to dedicate time in the field without limiting the experience due to not having enough financial support to keep working forward and provide richer empirical data to the area of doing research with children.

### **3.18 SUMMARY**

This chapter has discussed the tools, methods employed for collecting data from children aged between seven and nine years old. Detailed descriptions of the different tasks designed and conducted on both Phase 1 and Phase 2 were provided. In addition to this, I explained the theoretical framework underlying this ethnography and the directions taken for the data analysis process. Issues related to the macro and micro ethics underpinning this study were also discussed were a section of my reflections taken from conducting long periods of fieldwork in the Chilean context was presented. The next chapter will be devoted to data analysis, where I explain the process of emerging codes, description of the data and respective analysis to selected interactions recorded during the sections are explained in further detail.

## **CHAPTER IV. ANALYSIS CHAPTER**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explains further how the data obtained from the sessions recorded with the children during my fieldwork were analysed and presents findings of this study are presented according to the themes that emerged from the data analysis of the interactions with the children, among them, and with me. Detailed descriptions of how the data analysis was conducted are provided in the methodology chapter above (Chapter III). In addition to this, the different steps I followed in order to conduct the data analysis process are illustrated in this section, creating an audit trail. Indeed, the data obtained in this study contains the opinions the children shared, as well as their perceptions or feelings towards how they understood learning English within the context of primary school in Chile. More specifically, the main findings of this empirical research are reported in relation to how children reflected about the way they learn and are being taught English as a foreign language in Chile. In order to investigate this issue in depth, the following research questions (Figure 5) were proposed as a way to guide my exploratory, longitudinal study.

**Figure 5. Research question**

- How do you feel now after doing these tasks?
- Do you remember what happened the first time you did it?
- Has it improved? How?
- What helped you to get it right this time?
- What would help you to get it right?
- What can you do to make it better?



## **4.2 PRESENTATION OF DATA ANALYSIS**

The analysis of the qualitative data was conducted by looking at the fifty-five videos I recorded during eight months of fieldwork. In this time, I managed to record 15 hours and 15 minutes in School 1; 6 hours and 47 in School 2; giving a total number of 25 hours conducting activities related to information gap tasks and reflection tasks. In addition to the activities I carried with the children I also designed an individual interview with each girl, the interviews counted in total 6 hours and 14 minutes. All the activities together during the eight months of fieldwork were 26 hours and 17 minutes.

After recording the data and coming back from fieldwork, the process of data analysis began with the verbatim transcription of relevant sections within each recording. In order to guide my analysis, the relevant sections I selected, were those in which I observed children engaging in reflections about their processes of learning English. The transcription process helped me to immerse myself deeply in the data. After doing the transcriptions for each video related to (School 1), the data analysis proceeded by thematising, categorizing and assigning codes to the data transcribed. When this process was finished, the process continued by transcribing the data gathered from School 2. When working with the data from the second school, I built on the framework of initial codes and categories that emerged from the first school. However, new codes were also added illustrating that the children in the second school raised issues that did not appear in the former data set. Finally, both categorizations were merged leading to more consistent and explanatory themes.

Before moving to the first theme, I would like to briefly comment on the bilingual nature of the data. All extracts included in this chapter were originally transcribed, coded and categorized in Spanish; therefore, all interactions are translations I made from Spanish into English and even while I was writing this chapter I kept both the English and the Spanish versions deleting the Spanish version only at the very end to save space. Since this research study aims to showcase children's views using their own original words, translating presented a great challenge. On the one hand children's utterances in the original Spanish were often incomplete, difficult to understand and sometimes laden with grammatical mistakes (considering that children this age are also in the process of learning their own mother tongue). Further difficulty arose in representing in English exactly what children said originally in Spanish in terms of translating Chilean slang often used by the girls into English, which required constant checking and finding the most appropriate expressions that will be closer to what the children wanted to express in each extract.

Figure 6 below shows the transcribing conventions that were applied to each extract, based on Ellis and Ibrahim (2015).

**Figure 6. Transcription conventions for extracts**

<p>Transcription conventions for extracts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <i>Italics</i>: words spoken by the children in the target language, in this case English</li><li>- No italics: words translated from Spanish; children's mother tongue</li><li>- The words <b>in bold</b> represent children's physical movements or extra information added within each extract.</li></ul> <p>&lt; &gt; it is a subject replacement done during the translation. In Spanish we can omit the subject, but it is not possible to do the same in English for a sentence to make sense.</p>
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(Transcription convention example taken from Ellis and Ibrahim (2015))

In the following section the themes, sub-themes and codes obtained after the data analysis will be explained in detail in table 10 in section 4.3.1 below. Furthermore, this table was constructed under the themes, sub-themes and coded raised from the analysis all the sections where children talked about English language learning in each video recorded.

#### **4.2.1. Categories taken from the observation data analysis**

Table 10 summarizes the two themes; the corresponding sub-theme and codes obtained after conducting phase two of this study. Then these codes were merged and formed the final sub-themes and themes of this study.

**Table 10: Summary of the final themes, sub themes and codes categories data analysed for the second phase**

Themes	Sub-themes	Codes
<b>Theme 1</b> <b>The nature of Enjoyment</b>	Sub- theme1 1a) Because it is “you” and the “Monkey” and there is a good atmosphere	The monkey puppet
		Keep learning different things to teach them to the monkey
		I like to see you and the monkey
		Teach the Monkey the “fruits” in English
	Sub-theme 2 1b) Because it gives us freedom to be active, it is game like	We like doing the activities
		Because it’s fun
		We can colour
		Do acts and have fun
		I like to play with the monkey
		I like guessing
		Miming make me laugh
		I feel good working in the project
		I like to be asked
		It’s easy and fun
		We have to do many things
		We do worksheets
		We worked altogether
		We do fun stuffs
		Learning like this is fun
		I like working with others
		Play to the teacher of English
		We can do make different drawings to learn other things
		Learning from peers

<b>Theme 2</b> <b>Broader understanding of English learning</b>	<b>Sub-theme 2.1</b>  2.a) it is all word learning (flashcards, dictionary, etc.)	Use of mobile phones to search for words (translations) on Google
		Search for words on Google and learn them by heart
		We can use words we know and some others
		Other things that bring drawings to learn
	<b>Sub-theme 2.2</b>  2b) English lessons at school can be boring and tiring (sitting and writing, etc.)	To be seating all the time
		To be always writing
		Not being able to move around the classroom
	<b>Sub-theme 2.3</b>  2c) it is useful for now and the future (making friends, travelling, studying, etc.)	To a new classmate
		Make friends with a foreign
		You can use English to talk to people from other countries
		We can use English to travel
		We can use English to help people if they have an accident
		Do homework
		Take tests
		Read books in English

#### 4.3. THEMES

The following sections will present the main themes that emerged from the data relating to conversations held with the two groups of children from each school. This section attempts to present a consistent, grouped and merged analysis, after looking into all the data selected for responding to the research questions stated in the methodology chapter (section 3.2, p. 52) The

analysis commenced when I watched the fifty-two videos I recorded. I selected only those extracts where the children were commenting on their English experiences related to the tasks they had just worked with, but also, more broadly, when they commented on their English learning at school, at home or when they expressed beliefs and opinions about how to learn English. Then, I transcribed those interactions. After having completed the transcription process I coded and then I grouped the different emergent codes into broader themes.

Table 11 below, lists and describes each task children were invited to participate in during the period of eight months which constituted the fieldwork. For each activity, I included what kind of questions I asked the children; it is important to mention that I designed activities such as information gap tasks to encourage interaction and as a fresh experience to talk about, in spite of this, other tasks could have also encouraged reflection such as playing a game or telling a story. It is important to mention that the original names of the children were changed following appropriate ethical considerations. In fact, one section of the consent forms I employed with the children stated that: “their names were going to be replaced for number or for different name” (please see appendix 5.1 children’s consent form). Instead, I used pseudonyms to call them in different, but still friendly, different from using numbers or codes to name children in research.

**Table 11. Summary of activities done with the children and questions asked to promote reflection (specifications)**

I. Description of tasks				
1) Tasks	1.1 Type of tasks	1.2 Type of questions asked to encourage reflection	1.3 Complementary material used to initiate children's reflection	1.4 Type of data obtained
2) Information Gap Tasks: designed to permit children reflect about a specific activity. Reflection stage takes place after the activity is done (15')	2.1 1A- 1B (appendix x)	2.2 Did you like to do this activity? Why?	2.3 - Two sets of exact drawings for each activity. - Flashcards - Barrier (to avoid children looking at each other's work) - Markers with different colours. - For 3A – 3B I used a small whiteboard	2.4 Oral: questions asked at the end of the activity during “reflection stage” the children in pairs and me discussed in relation to the activity they had just done.
		Did you like these drawings?		
	2A-B-C (appendix x)  IGA created by the girls (appendix x)  3A-3B (appendix x)	Did you encounter any difficulty?		
		What can we do this activity better?		
		How can we learn more English?		
		How can the Monkey learn better English?		
		How can the Monkey help his friends (or other monkeys) to learn English?		
		How can the Monkey learn the words of the activity?		
		How can we learn “the words” better?		

				to write the instructions	Worksheets created by me and done by the children and hand- outs made by the children for their project pair too.
3) Other activities: designed to directly enable and encourage metacognitive skills such as reflecting with the children. These were often group activities that	3.1 Reflection Cards (see appendix xyz)	3.2		3.3	3.4
		- What is the monkey doing?			
		- What can we see in the cards? Why is the monkey doing these different activities? What for?			
	- Each child chose the three activities from the set of cards that they like the most to learn English and explain why (In this part of the activity each child had to share and discuss her answers with the rest of the group)		and white cards with drawings of a monkey doing different activities to learn English (see chapter xyz)		
	3.1.1 Best strategies to learn English	3.1.2 1 <sup>st</sup> part of the			- Why do you think the Monkey should learn English? Why learning English may be important?
- Would it be important?					
				3.1.3	3.1.4
				- Drawings of activities/strategies/ people commonly	-Oral: group discussion

lasted longer than IGA.	(focus on: what is best to do/ <b>which activities/strategies are better for learning English</b> )	activity: Group	- Why do you think you should learn to speak in English?	employ to learn English - Cardboard to stick the drawings.	
		2 <sup>nd</sup> part of the activity: Individual	- How can we learn English? (What can do to learn English?)  - Each child receives three coloured sheets where they have to draw which are for them three ways of learning English they find useful. After colouring they explained the rationale behind each drawing.	-Coloured sheets -Pencil colour - Cardboard with LLS drawings	- Drawings and talk-aloud answers.
	3.2 Interviews (talk-aloud, individual activity) + Monkey	3.2.1		3.2.2	3.2.3
		1) What kind of preparation do you feel you received before participating in the project?		- Toys to allow children play while conducting the interview.  - Monkey puppet	Oral: talk- aloud interview between each child and me. For this activity, I followed a “semi-structure
		2) How do you feel about being part of the project?			
		3) Do you feel like you have opportunities to talk in the project?			
		4) Do you like the activities we do in the project?			
		5) Were the instructions of the activities difficult for you?			
		6) How important is learning English for you?			



		7) Can we do to learn English?		interview outline”. Each question was prepared beforehand.
		8) Do you know anybody that can speak English?		
	3.3 Preferred ways of learning English  (focus on: what I <b>enjoy</b> when learning)	3.3.1 Introductory group discussion topic: What things have you done to learn English? (in any context: school, home, alone, with friends, watch TV, etc.)	3.3.2 - Big piece of coloured cardboard. - Coloured sheets - Pencils colour	3.3.3 - Answers were given in both oral form and in drawings made by the children.
		What kind of activities do you enjoy when you are learning English?		
		How can the Monkey learn English better? What have we done so far?		
		Children are asked to draw individually the three activities they enjoy the most when learning English. Each child was encouraged to share her answer aloud and give reasons why.		
	3.4 Free activity at the end of the intervention (last activity)	3.4.1 Preparation: before conducting the last activity I gather the girls before at School 1(MAE) I told them that I wanted them to create by using “realia” a teaching material that can help other children (or themselves) to learn English. Each child told me the materials	3.4.2 - Play dough - Pencils colour - Drawings - Paint	3.4.3 Concrete material created by the children in pictures and

		they were going to do for their activity and I brought them along for our last session.		recording (the girls wanted to take the activity they created with them)
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#### **4.3.1. Theme 1: The nature of enjoyment (or learning English in the project)**

Enjoyment was often mentioned as a salient element when learning by the children, in our conversations. This theme comprises different extracts taken from the data that attempt to illustrate how children described in their own words what were those aspects of learning English that they perceived as being “fun” and “entertaining”. Since the data was very extensive, I only included those extracts I regarded as more representatives within what was mentioned by the children from the two schools. The first subtheme mainly discusses issues of attachment and bonding that children felt towards the monkey glove puppet, and me; the second subtheme shows how “being free” and being able to move, colour and miming are elements that are regarded as important for better learning. Lastly, the third sub-theme relates to how children saw ‘learning’ and ‘fun’ as two concepts being deeply connected and intertwined, which allowed them to take the experience of learning leaning outside home allowing them to copy games and play them with relevant people in their lives (as siblings, friends, cousins and parents)

##### **4.3.1.1 Subtheme 1: 1.a) because it is “you” and the “Monkey” and there is a good atmosphere**

In the following episodes the main theme is that learning English is fun. I will also discuss the effect that the company of the Monkey puppet brought to the children. On many occasions the girls reported that they had fun because they could spend time with the Monkey and me. It seems that for some children learning can be fun if the activities are conducted with others who make them feel good and who the children want to spend time with. Close relationships with children and the importance of the development of such a bond has been discussed in the literature elsewhere such as in teacher-child relationship by Birch and Ladd (1997), Lynch and Cicchetti (1997) and Hamre and Pianta (2001). Also, concrete prompts, objects such as flashcards that the children could handle and play with, the worksheets as well as the opportunity to use marker pens were also mentioned as contributing to creating a fun learning context.

Extract nº 1

School 1	Date: 08/04/15
Participants: Ale/ Naty	Type of activity: IGA 1A
<p>Line1 P: but... did you like this activity?</p> <p>Line 2 Ale: <i>yes!</i></p> <p>Line 3 Naty: <i>yes!</i></p> <p>Line 4 P: why?</p> <p>Line 5 Naty: because we have fun...</p> <p>Line 6 P: umhh (holds the monkey in her arms and does a sort of hello sign to Naty) okay, you had fun, anything else?</p> <p>Line 7 Naty: (laughs) also... we... also we have fun with you and the Monkey</p>	

Extract nº 1 above, displays an interaction between Ale, Naty and me. During the reflection stage I asked the children if they liked the activity we had just done (line 2) both children answered “*yes!*” quite convinced. When I asked them why in Line 4 Naty replied, “*Because we have fun...*” (line 5) and then in line 7 she complements her answer by saying, while laughing, that she also likes the activity because she has fun with me and with the Monkey Puppet.

Extract nº 2

School 1	Date: 26/05/15
Participants: María	Type of activity: Interview
<p>Line 1 P: okay... and is there anything you like about the project?</p> <p>Line 2 María: to be with you and do the tasks in English</p> <p>Line 3 P: do you like the tasks in English?</p> <p>Line 4 María: yes</p>	

In extract n ° 2, María responds to my questions by saying that what she likes about the project is to be with me, but interestingly, she adds another element to this feeling of having fun. In line 2, she says that she likes to be with me and also she likes the activities of the project because they are fun and “*we do the tasks in English*”. Children perceive the intervention as an opportunity to learn English, at times to reinforce what they have already learned or to learn new words or engage in fun activities. In addition to this, the project for them, it is novelty and it takes them out of class their class, which makes them feel special among their peers.

In extract n° 3 below, I was asking Ale how she prefers to learn English and what kind of things she enjoys doing when learning.

#### Extract n° 3

School 1	Date: 20/05/15
Participants: Ale	Type of activity: Interviews
<p>Line 1: P: and how would you like to learn then? English</p> <p>Line 2: Ale: with you</p> <p>Line 3: P: with me?? Okay and doing what? doing what?</p> <p>Line 4: Ale: asking questions, worksheets and play</p> <p>Line 5: P: what kind of worksheets you would like to do for example?</p> <p>Line 6: Ale: the one with Santa Claus!</p> <p>Line 7: P: plenty girls liked it why would that be?</p> <p>Line 8: Ale: because I like Santa Claus!</p> <p>Line 9: P: why do you like him? Because you like Christmas?</p> <p>Line 10: Ale: yes (gets distracted with the monkey plastic figures)</p>	

In line 2, Ale answers that she likes learning English with me, just like what children said in former extracts. In line 3, I asked “*by doing what?*” to what Ale responded in line 4: “*asking questions, worksheets and play*”, which are all linked to the Information gap activities; then she talks about enjoying playing. Then I asked her in line 3 what kind of worksheets she likes to do and she immediately remembered the Santa Claus activity (information gap activity

3C, see appendix 2) (line 6). In line 7, I commented to Ale that other girls from the group also mentioned that they enjoyed the activity and when I asked why, Ale responded in line 8: “*because I like Santa*”. This kind of answer may suggests that appealing characters, topics or drawings (such as animals) that are related to the interest of children would stick in their mind longer and would boost their motivation for learning.

In the next extract n° 4, following the idea of “being fun”, Andrea talks about how she enjoys being part of the project and along with this she can learn more (according to her words)

#### Extract n° 4

School 2	Date: 09/06/15
Participants: Andrea	Type of activity: Interview
<p>Line 1 Andrea: and also because I want to be here</p> <p>Line 2 Andrea: I immediately thought it was fun (referring to the activities of the project)</p> <p>Line 3 P: ahh you thought it was very fun, to come to the project</p> <p>Line 4 Andrea: and in that way I could have fun and also we would enjoy and learn a lot</p>	

In this extract above (n° 4) I asked Andrea: “*why do you like to be part of the project?*” and she gave me several reasons including making her parents proud, travelling abroad and then she said in line 1 above “*because I want to be here*” meaning “I like to come to the sessions” and then in line 3 Andrea tells me that she found the project ‘very fun’ from the first time. Lastly, she comments that she thinks that by being part of the project she can have fun, but at the same time as line 3 suggests “*I could have fun and also we would enjoy and learn a lot*”. According to Andrea when she has fun, she can enjoy herself and therefore improve her learning (line 4).

Extract n° 5 below, serves to support what Andrea mentions in extract n° 5 above, where she talks about her personal willingness to be part of the project. Rocío, in our conversation below adds the social side as an aspect that she also enjoys when learning.

## Extract nº 5

School 1	Date: 08/06/15
Participants: Rocío, Monkey, Pia	Type of activity: Individual Activity Interview
Line 1: P: could you tell me why are the ones you like the most? Line 2: Rocío: is that we could be altogether and learn while we have fun	

In extract nº 5 above Rocío is clearly stating that the activities she likes the most are the group activities, in which the group of girls gather together (in their respective school; I never mixed the groups and all the activities were done with each group separately) on the same day and we did a reflection activity together. Often these activities involved colouring, cutting and pasting their thoughts and answering the questions in drawings, modelling with play dough or anything that would have emerged from their creativity, in which children would give their opinion in a shared and supportive environment. For Rocío in line 2, the activities she likes the most are the group ones, because: *“is that we could be altogether and learn while we have fun”*. In her answer, Rocío is closely connecting concepts of fun and learning, as well as enjoying being in the company of peers.

Interestingly, extract nº 6 María moves away from the topic just mentioned above, since, it mentions as well that she enjoys my company, however, she did not mentioned her partners, but instead the material I prepared to teach them such as the flashcards (mentioned deeper in Subtheme 2.1: 2.a) and other visual materials in order to learn English.

## Extract nº 6

School 2	Date: 07/07/15
Participants: María	Type of activity: Interviews
Line 1 P: okay which one is number two? Line 2 María: eh... study with you Line 3 P: study with me, okay, doing what? What sort of things you like...? Line 4 María: eh listen to how you tell me the words in English Line 5 P: okay, what else? Line 6 María: the flashcards	

Line 7 P: the flashcards? the cards?

Line 8 María: yess and then when I saw them I wanted to start to... I liked learning English

Line 9 P: you liked learning like this

Line 10 María: yes

Line 11 P: so then you liked learning English by listening and watching

Line 12 María: the flashcards

In extract nº 6 (above), María also mentioned that she likes learning with me. In line 2 she said: “*ehhh... study with you*”, when I asked her to say more about this in line 3 she explains in line 4: “*ehh listen to how you tell me the words in English*”, referring to the flashcards I used at the beginning of each session to reinforce vocabulary. In addition to that, for María, teaching materials often employed for teaching children as “flashcards” are also elements she identifies with something she likes as she comments in Line 8 “*yess and then when I saw them I wanted to start to... I liked learning English*”, referring to that when she saw something concrete to get your hands on, such as flashcards on top of the table, she wanted to play with them.

At the beginning of the project I showed the children different flashcards with the same elements that appeared in the worksheets. I let the children touch the cards; play with them and often the flashcards were utilized to teach the vocabulary for the activity to the Monkey or to their partners. After a couple of weeks Anto asked me if she and her partner could show the flashcards to each other (without me). I was impressed and I let them do it. They took turns and showed the flashcards to the Monkey (teaching the vocabulary related to the information gap activity). This gave them a sense of autonomy and added playfulness to the warm-up of each session. At the end of extract nº 6, I recalled what María told me how she liked learning English by summarizing her ideas in: line 11 “so then you liked learning English by listening and watching” and then she immediately mentioned “*the flashcards*” in line 12. The flashcards were meant to help children reactivate their knowledge of the vocabulary included in each activity and in some cases it helped to teach new words (often



the case, especially in school 2). Flashcards provided for the children a concrete material that allowed them to feel active in the learning.

The next extract (nº 7) connects with what María has just mentioned in extract nº 6 above, where she highlights how she enjoys when I teach her English using the material I created, which directly connects with what Anto brings in extract nº 7 when she mentions worksheets as well. Interestingly, in extract nº 7 Anto raises the issues of how guessing, which is an activity she enjoys, brings her, at the same time, that feeling of nervousness in her tummy, when she notices a mistake. In the context of the project, making mistakes while conducting the activity made Anto laughing.

#### Extract nº 7

School 1	Date: 27/05/15
Participants: Anto	Type of activity: Interview
Line 1 Anto: because it's fun to be like this... guessing, guessing what that little worksheet is Line 2 because sometimes I feel butterflies in my tummy if I make a mistake, and I laugh Line 3 when Rocío gets cross outs, it's super fun such as the 'duck' I remember and she did Line 4 (stands up and mimes a duck) Line 5 P: ahhh you like that we can do miming Line 6 Anto: yes (smiling) Line 7 P: do you like that? Line 8 Anto: yess	

The data in extract 7 above come from an interview. The interview session was set as an individual activity, where children met me for the first time only without their partners (see methodology chapter, section 3.5) This thinking aloud interview provided me the opportunity to dedicate time to talk to each child, allowing me to know each girl a bit better (individually). In line 1, Anto starts by mentioning that she likes guessing what the worksheet is about (considering that children could not look at each other's' work while giving the instruction for conducting the activity) "Guessing" makes Anto feel engaged in the activity, however, not knowing what the next activity will be makes her a bit anxious as she comments in line 2 "*sometimes I feel butterflies in my tummy if I make a mistake*" referring to getting nervous

and that he can feel it in her stomach. At the same time, in line 2 Anto talks about laughter and how laughter is important for her. In line 3 Anto talks about miming a duck and that she thinks is super fun, because Rocío stood up and started to move her arms and doing “*quack, quack*” imitating a duck, but without saying the word in English. According to this episode, learning *can* happen in a positive, secure and supportive atmosphere in which children are allowed to feel relaxed, to enjoy themselves, to laugh, to make mistakes; get things wrong without being afraid to fail in fact, even feeling this sense of “nervousness” made the activity fun for Anto.

In the next extract below nº 8 María, Caro and me are talking about the activity they have just done. Caro also mentions how using marker pens while working with the picture gap tasks as well as looking at her partner’s gestures and miming were relevant aspects of their learning they enjoy.

Extract nº 8

School 2	Date: 07/04/15
Participants: María, Caro, M	Type of activity: Pairwork IGA (own)
Line 1 P: do you like the activity? Line 2 Children: yes Line 3 P: what did you like about the activity? Line 4 Caro: marking Line 5 María: I like Caro’s mimes (signs) Line 6 P: the gestures that Caro made, why? Line 7 María: because they were amusing	

In this extract (nº 8) María is telling me that she likes the gestures that her partner does for her to understand. In lines 5 and 7, María adds that she likes Caro’s gestures, because they amused her (often makes her laugh). Having an opportunity to mime the vocabulary when not knowing the words in English provided some sense of relaxation for the children, since the idea of not knowing a word was not seen as something bad or negative, but as an opportunity to express yourself by other means as people do when trying to solve language

gaps in real situations. For them, being active and using their body to learn English was fun and something they enjoyed very much.

Laughing was also a relevant topic for the children. Adding to the idea of liking the gestures made by a learning partner as María and Caro said earlier in extract nº 9, from what I observed I discovered that the children enjoyed seeing their friends trying to explain themselves by imitating movements or sounds made by animals. In other words, it was mainly because “miming” and trying to “guess” made them laugh while working on the information gap tasks that they enjoyed so much. Extract nº 9 below, illustrates how laughing played also an important part of “good learning”.

School 1	Date: 03/06/15
Participants: Naty	Type of activity: Interview
Line 1 P: and why is not difficult? Line 2 Naty: because... it's joyful Line 3 P: because it's joyful Line 4 Naty: because, because, because... ahhh because we can also laugh Line 5 Naty: and when we laugh is more fun	

In addition to what was previously mentioned by Rocío in extract nº 8 above. Naty in extract nº 9 is also talking about the activities of the project as something fun and joyful, combining, as Rocío, learning and fun as interrelated concepts. Moreover, this extract shows that laughter is also an important aspect for children when learning English. For Naty, for example, in line 2, the project is not difficult because it is entertaining for her. Later, in line 4 she adds to her answer: *“because, because, because... ahhh because we can also laugh”*. Laughter is allowed in contrast to constantly being asked to remain silent in their classrooms. And then she complements her answer by saying: *“when we laugh we have more fun”*

The next extract nº10 attempts to show how children explained that learning while having fun are two crucial elements that facilitate Ale and Naty's English learning.

Extract n° 10

School 1	Date: 29/04/15
Participants: Ale, Naty	Type of activity: Pairwork IGA (2A- 2B)
<p>Line 1 P: with Monkey we want to know if you enjoyed doing this activity?</p> <p>Line 2 Ale: yes (nodding)</p> <p>Line 3 P: why? Can you tell me why you liked it? Why you don't like it?</p> <p>Line 4 Naty: (shouting) I love it too!!</p> <p>Line 5 P: why did you love it?</p> <p>Line 6 Naty: because we had to guess the words and that is what I liked the most</p> <p>Line 7 P: you like guessing the words</p> <p>Line 8 Naty: yes</p> <p>Line 9 P: and did you like them?</p> <p>Line 10 Naty: yes</p> <p>Line 11 P: and you Ale?</p> <p>Line 12 Ale: yes</p> <p>Line 13 P: do you like learning the words or not?</p> <p>Line 14 Ale: yes</p> <p>Line 15 P: and what else did the activities had that were amusing? What else did it make it Line 16 fun? Or that it was boring?</p> <p>Line 17 Ale: it was fun, because you let us be... you let us be... I laughed because</p> <p>Line 18 Naty told me things in Spanish....</p>	

In line 6, in which Naty says that what she likes the most was “*guessing*” and knowing the words. Interestingly, as the conversation develops Ale in line 17 and 18, says that she likes the activities because ‘I let them be’ (which can be related to freedom again) and also because her partner Naty tells her the instructions in Spanish, were only used as a last resort, but Naty often tries to do it behind my back. This brought a lot of fun for the children and me, because in order to talk in Spanish Naty had to cover her face and make gestures or actions to deceive me, which did not work, but brought us moments of laughter. Even though, at the very first sight, this seems to be about stretching boundaries and resisting the tasks, it was a natural way to solve her linguistic problem of not knowing how to express herself in English (due to

her lack of proficiency and vocabulary in English) In lines 17 and 18, Ale is explaining why she feels happy being part of the project, when she says in line 17: *“it was fun, because you let us be...”* pointing out that they like the project because they work in a relaxed and more flexible atmosphere.

#### **4.3.1.2 Subtheme 2: 1.b) because it gives us freedom to be active, it is game like**

The information gap activities (see Chapter III, section 3.9) were a big part of the project. In order to be able to carry out the information gap activities children employed in many cases miming (acting out) as a compensatory strategy (reference for this) when not knowing how to say the name of the elements that appeared on the worksheets (see appendix 3). The rationale for this mainly relies on the fact that in spite that children could not use Spanish to give the instructions of the activity, they were allowed (and encouraged) to use body language/ mime to tell their partners what to mark in their worksheets, these could be linked to concepts such as active learning. Indeed, according to Shin and Crandall (2014 p.27) *“Children are energetic and physically active”*, and the information gap activities did require that the girls had to follow the instructions given by their partners, such as crossing items out, drawing ticks, colouring, drawing other elements (among others). Additionally, these information gap activities demanded from children to pay close attention to the worksheet and encouraged them to take turns. These activities often left room for incorporating physical involvement (movements) when giving the instructions to their partners (when words were not known, children often mimed or explained the word unknown using their body). Moreover, while giving the instructions at the beginning of each activity, I told children that if they did not know how to say the name of an element in English, they could use mimes, make gestures with their hands, make drawings in the air, move their whole body, make sounds if needed (especially with vocabulary related to animals). From the first sessions of the project (March-April 2015) I encouraged children to try to use more English rather than miming, however, this represented a challenge for the children. This situation was more recurrent in school 2, since this group of children had a very low English proficiency. They had access to fewer hours of English lessons than school 1; and limited access to

complementary materials and resources too, which made them know a smaller group of words and expressions in English according to their level.

On numerous occasions children exaggerated their movements or acted out trying to appear intentionally funny or at times the fact of not understanding what children were trying to express to each other was also a reason to laugh. Moreover, in some other context as in the school 2, as it was mentioned above the use of miming was the main means of communication for these children due to their low proficiency level of English.

The following extracts below, attempt to illustrate what children said about their perceptions of learning and tasks, which were perceived to be game-like activities for learning English. For example, in extract 11 below, Caro is talking about how fun it can be to play in order to learn that you feel like doing over and over reaching even relevant people around them.

Extract nº 11

School 2	Date: 02/06/2015
Participants: Caro	Type of activity:
<p>Line 1 P: why “<i>play</i>”?</p> <p>Line 2 Caro: because a teacher can teach you a game of English and then it’s like you want to</p> <p>Line 3 play it more to learn more English</p> <p>Line 4 P: okay, so how?</p> <p>Line 5 Caro: and then play with your brother or with one of your classmates</p> <p>Line 6 P: okay, good</p> <p>Line 7 Caro: that wants to play with you (affective: in the sense of feeling the desire to play with someone else)</p> <p>Line 8 P: okay, so when we play a game in English that we like... we want to...</p> <p>Line 9 Caro: play again</p> <p>Line 10 P: to learn by playing and to learn English, okay! Good!</p>	

Extract nº 11 serves to illustrate that when engaged in doing an activity they enjoy they feel like doing it over and over again and it is regarded as an important factor in learning. Caro and I are talking about why she thinks “*play*” is a good strategy that can help others, such as: “*you brother or with one of your classmates*” as Caro says in line 5 to learn English better. When I asked her: “*why?*” in line 1, Caro, told me (lines 2 and 3): “*because a teacher can teach you a game of English and then it’s like you want to play it more to learn more English*”. Later, in line 4, I was seeking for Caro to elaborate a bit more about how she thinks we can use “*play*” for learning better, instead, Caro added: “*and then play with your brother or with one of your classmates*” in line 5 and then in line 6 she complements by saying: “*(someone) that wants to play with you*”. Playing with others, such as her brother can be regarded as a social strategy (Chamot et al. 1999) in which children enjoy sharing and teaching others.

Regarding the words of Caro, she wanted to learn the “games” to practise “*because a teacher can teach you a game of English and then it’s like you want to play it more to learn more English*”, in lines 2 and 3. In this sense, it can be said that children could go home and teach this game to significant others, such as their siblings or friends in school or at home. Furthermore, on several occasions children saw their learning processes as a shared event involving other people such as a cousin, mom, an auntie, or the teacher. Often, during our conversations, children brought up their friends at school, their siblings, parents and extended family, revealing that for them it is also important to learn because, in that way, they can teach, share and evaluate their own learning. When teaching others, children also evaluate how much they know about English (Kirsch, 2012). In another excerpt (interview activity, 27/05/15) Anto mentioned something about playing to pretend to be a teacher of English, for example:

*“Anto: yes, I played with my friends to be the teacher of English (interview activity, 27/05/15)”*

Lastly, it can also be said, to some extent, that for children playing with others is strongly related to how emotionally attached they feel to significant people within their immediate environment (linked to earlier discussion about me and the puppet)

As part of the activities children worked in the project, they were also aimed to encourage children to create and produce their/ and their partners' activities (see appendix 6). The next extract below (n° 12) is a passage taken from a conversation I had with the children after they had created their own information gap activities. I was interested in listening if the children enjoyed to create material in which they were free to include any element, colour, decoration, shape the children wanted to choose. As Anto said in the extract below, drawings and being able to choose was something they enjoyed.

#### Extract n° 12

School 1	Date: 02/07/15
Participants: Emi , Cami, M	Type of activity: Pairwork IGA (own)
<p>Line 1 P: why is it so? In this case that is entertaining, perhaps it's super, super, super boring Line 2 or not?</p> <p>Line 3 Emi: (opens her eyes wide open) nooo</p> <p>Line 4 P: okay... and what else did you like doing about your own drawings?</p> <p>Line 5 Emi: we choose what we colour, we choose what we can draw</p> <p>Line 6 P: okaaayy</p> <p>Line 7 Emi: raise her hands and say: because we do (create) our own instructions</p>	

In extract number 12 above Emi talks about being able to choose what they can do in an activity. When I ask Emi in line 4: *“what else did you like about doing your own drawings?”* she said in line 5: *“we choose what we colour, we choose what we can draw”* and then she adds in line 7: *“because we do (create) our own instructions”*.

#### 4.3.2 Summary

Enjoyment, emotional bonds and laughing, were central during the implementation of the project. Children are active learners who benefit from engaging in physical activities, as well as, in tasks and challenges that trigger their creativity. In comparison with what the girls shared during our meetings for them enjoyment and being involved in active learning were also crucial for successful and meaningful English language learning. Children were quite



articulate and clear in expressing that they enjoyed different aspects of learning English. Interestingly, from the data it can be drawn out that children enjoy not only what is connected to language learning such as the activities of the project, but also they were quite strong in saying that they enjoyed visual input when learning English, such as the flashcards, as well as, drawings and elements in teaching materials that are appealing or familiar to them such as the animals of the zoo. Children also enjoyed special characters as Santa, which makes that activity to stick in their minds. Moreover, for these girls enjoying time when learning is also related to spending time with friends, with a friend, family, me and the Monkey. Affective dimensions of learning are crucial for children in order to feel encouraged, supported and motivated to learn. Home and school also provided plenty opportunities for children to carry on studying English. Laughter, guessing and miming are also fundamental for the girls and as the case of laughter; it was often present during our sessions.

Considering all of what I have presented in the first theme above, it is worth mentioning that the children and I developed a strong emotional bond. This was not only an advantage in terms of obtaining better data from the girls, but it provided me the opportunity to create a meaningful and honest relationship with them. In addition to this, the monkey glove puppet provided quite a good help in all of the aspects of the project. The following subtheme attempts to illustrate what was perception that the children had in respect to active learning and freedom while learning English. At the same time, the next theme covers how active learning and being able to move and play while learning are relevant elements considered by the girls. It would be relevant to keep in mind when searching for a better methodology to teach children English.

#### **4.3.3. Theme 2: Broader understanding of English learning**

The second theme, attempts to portray the opinions children have in relation to what learning English means for them more broadly, moving away from the concrete learning experiences in the project. Firstly, subtheme 2.1 below opens this section by pointing out the fact that on many occasions children referred to learning English as a set of words that are needed to be learned in order to get their translation equivalent or language learning was seen as simply memorizing and accumulating words. Later, subtheme 2.2 treats the issue of how boring and

tiring learning can be at times in some contexts. Lastly, subtheme 2.3 approaches how children see learning English also as a useful tool in their future, whether they want to feel prepared for tests, secondary school as even travelling abroad or going to university.

#### 4.3.3.1 Subtheme 2.1: 2. a) it is all word learning (flashcards, dictionary, etc.)

Extract n° 13

School 1	Date: 02/07/15
Participants: Emi/ Cami	Type of activity: IGA (own)
<p>Line 1 P: girls, and how do you think we can make these activities better?</p> <p>Line 2 Cami: ehh... study more English...</p> <p>Line 3 P: ok, study English, what for?</p> <p>Line 4 Cami: also listen (<b>Emi interrupts and say: study more</b>) the dictionary, I know songs in English!</p> <p>Line 5 P: okk... you know songs in English?</p> <p>Line 6 Emi: the dictionary!</p> <p>Line 7 P: use the dictionary, but what would be useful of using a dictionary for these</p> <p>Line 8 activities? (referring to the information gap activity 1B, see appendix xyz)</p> <p>Line 9 Cami: use the comput</p> <p>Line 10 P: ok, but what can we use it for?</p> <p>Line 11 Emi: because in Google you can find everything</p> <p>Line 12 Cami: we can search words and learn them</p> <p>Line 13 Emi: (makes a funny face) by heart (complementing her partner's answer)</p> <p>Line 14 P: by heart and these words? What could I do with the new words that I would learn?</p> <p>Line 15 Cami: ehh I bring them here and then they will be put on the worksheets</p> <p>Line 16 P: ok, so if I learn new words I could put them in my...</p> <p>Line 17 Cami: work- sheet</p> <p>Line 18 P: in my worksheet, do you agree Emi?</p> <p>Line 19 Emi: yes</p>	

Extract n° 13 shows a conversation between Emi, Cami and myself. After finishing working on an information gap activity, I usually asked the children: *“how can we make this activity better?”* (line 1) as part of the reflection stage (see sections 3.4.3 and 3.8.2). As Cami states in line 2 for her *“studying more English”* is a good way to improve her performance in the information gap activities. Looking for opportunities to practise are one of the most important set of cognitive strategies, according to Oxford, (1990) and at the same time, these kind of strategies are very much encouraged regarding Chilean primary instruction. Then, in line 3, when I asked her: *what for?* Caro complements by saying in line 4: *“also listen, the dictionary, I know songs in English!”* Using the dictionary was a recurrent answer, in this sense, it can be said that using resources such as looking up words in a dictionary for searching meaning or a translation in Spanish (using, utilizing) as a way to solve a linguistic problem as not knowing the meaning of a word in English. Later in the conversation (line 6) Emi mentions *“the dictionary!”* in her answer as well, building on her previous response. When I acknowledged that point, I asked her to tell me more about what she thinks about the use of a dictionary, she responded: *“use the comput”*. I wanted to explore and know more about the relationship, Emi suggests, between a dictionary and a computer. Later, in line 10 when I asked her: *what can we use it (a computer) for?* Emi replied: *“because in Google you can find everything”*. For these children searching words in a dictionary predominantly means looking up words on Google translator; perhaps for children the mental image of a dictionary is not a book anymore, but an online browser such Google translator. Indeed, according to Emi in line 11 and Cami in line 12, consequently, knowing the meaning in Spanish of words written in English can help them improve their performance for this information gap activity, reinforcing the idea of learning English is mainly concentrated in accumulating the meaning of words in English translated into Spanish. This can be seen as a strong claim often made by the children when being asked about different ways of improving their own learning. Indeed, in extract n° 14 María and Caro, raise a similar issue in the following extract.

Extract nº 14

School 2	Date: 14/04/15
Participants: María/ Caro	Type of activity: IGA
<p>Line 1 P: hey girls, how do you think... I mean there were things a little bit more difficult, so</p> <p>Line 2 how do you think that we can do this activity better, these activities better?</p> <p>Line 3 Caro: using other drawings?</p> <p>Line 4 P: okay</p> <p>Line 5 Caro: so we can learn more</p> <p>Line 6 P: other drawings with other words?</p> <p>Line 7 María: nods</p> <p>Line 8 P: or different with the same objects?</p> <p>Line 9 María: others</p> <p>Line 10 P: others? Other elements to learn, why?</p> <p>Line 11 María: to learn faster and to keep learning English</p> <p>Line 12 P: ahh to learn faster. María and why would you like to have drawings with different</p> <p>Line 13 objects?</p> <p>Line 14 María: because... then you can get taught?</p> <p>Line 15 P: okay</p> <p>Line 16 Caro: and then it's like saying I learned and then they tell you "ok, let's see if you know it (referring to words)... and you know it and in the meantime you can be learning in the room somewhere else and you can play with your brother...</p>	

In extract nº 14 above, Maria and Caro mentioned the use of visual aids to facilitate the learning of English as in extract 15 below. In line 1 when I asked the girls “how we can make the activities we are working on better”, Caro replied in line 3 “*using other drawings*” and then in line 5 below she complements by adding: “*so we can learn more*”, which caught my attention. Since, I wanted to go deeper in that idea I asked her: “*different drawings with the same vocabulary or if she thought about adding other drawings*” (in lines 6 and 8) to what Maria replied in line 9 “other (elements)” when I asked why, she interestingly added: “*to*

*learn faster*” or “*keep learning English*” (Maria, line 11). Interestingly, the use of flashcards and worksheets with different drawings always caught their attention. It is worth mentioning that as in extract n° 13, I am trying to see how children reflected to the ways we can get better at performing the information gap tasks. The children in these extracts suggest that performance can be improved by practising with new objects, drawings or elements, however, the focus on learning English remain as ultimately adding new words or sets of vocabulary to the ones they already know, so then, they can teach these “words” to their friends, siblings or extensive family such as cousins.

In addition to this, extract n° 15 below also shows how children enjoyed sharing their learning with others. In fact, in extract n° 15 children actually play school with the monkey. Furthermore, children remembered as well the materials we used during the project such the flashcards.

#### Extract n° 15

School 1	Date: 24/08/15
Participants: Emi, Rocío, Monkey, Pia	Type of activity: Pair activity Children work on the activities they designed and created.
<p>Line 1: P: girls and why did you want to make the flashcards?</p> <p>Line 2: Rocío: (baby voice) because we wanted to teach the Monkey, the teacher of Monkey...</p> <p>Line 3: P: because you want it... pardon?</p> <p>Line 4: Rocío: because I wanted that Monkey saw how he could teach some of his friends</p> <p>Line 5: P: okay, what for...</p> <p>Line 6: Rocío: (inaudible) so later he could say “this is my teacher” she teaches me English</p> <p>Line 7: every day and now I will teach you</p> <p>Line 8: (at the back Emi shouts: what a lovely teacher!)</p> <p>Line 9: P: how lovely! And you Emi? Why did you want to do it? The flashcards?</p> <p>Line 10: Rocío stands up and goes to Emi</p>	

Line 11: Emi is sitting with her arms crossed

Line 12: P: what was the reason?

Line 13: Emi: I got inspired

Line 14: P: you got inspired?

Line 15: Emi: nods and laugh

Line 16: Then we all laughed

Flashcards (including any visual aid) acted as great catalysts of motivation for the children. During the session where extract nº15 took place, I had an activity prepared for that day (24/08/15) according to my research plan, but instead Emi asked me if they could draw flashcards instead of doing the activity I had prepared. Emi was very fond of drawing and colouring; I always carried extra sheets of paper colours, pens and pencil colours, so I agreed to change the task; I asked the other girl, Rocío, and she was also happy to change the activity and do what Emi suggested. Previous to this event, the children were encouraged to draw their own flashcards with their favourite words in them. We worked on the flashcards (see appendix 7) and then as part of the reflection stage, I asked both girls questions about the activity they had just done. In line 1, I am asking both girls why they wanted to work on making flashcards to what Rocío replied: *“because we wanted to teach the Monkey, the teacher of Monkey”* And then in line 4 she complements *“because I wanted that Monkey saw how he could teach some of his friends”*. I wanted to know a bit more so I asked her in line 5 *“okay, what for...”* Rocío in line *“so later he could say “this is my teacher” “she teaches me English every day and now I will teach you”* Showing how important is the company of the monkey for the children and how they easily assume the role of a teacher who wants to help and wants her student to be proud of her. I replied to her answer: *“how lovely!”* (line nº 9). Then, I addressed Emi directly in line 9, *“And you Emi? Why did you want to do it? The flashcards?”* she replied: *“I got inspired”* that answer let us all laughing as in line 16, describes. Although, children are talking about the use of flashcards for learning, this interaction shows at the same time that when learning/ teaching English for Emi and Rocío the focus is on words, seeing English as a set of words that can be put into drawings and they can repeat. In this extract too, other elements such active learning as well, role- playing with

the monkey and pretending to be her teacher.

As I mentioned before in the introduction of this theme, extract n° 16 illustrates through the words of Cami, the instrumental use of learning English can also be important for doing better at their current English lessons at school. Similar to previous extracts, Cami draws on the importance of relevant people around her parents are a complementary learning company.

Extract n° 16

School 1	Date: 25/05/15
Participants: Cami	Type of activity: Individual
Line 1: P: okay, why else would be important to learn English for you? Line 2: Cami: sometimes I have to do my English homework and if I know them (referring to the “words”) Line 3: Cami: it can be easy, or if I have a to take a test Line 4: P: mm yes if I learn English (then I summarized what she has said) Line 5: Cami: my parents can ask me something or a worksheet that I have to check on my Line 6: Cami: own without studying or a test, that is also useful for me	

For Cami, as she states in extract 16, if I study enough English, learning can become easier. In lines 2 and 3, Cami refers to her English homework by saying: *“sometimes I have to do my English homework and if I know them, it can be easy, or if I have to take a test”*. According to Cami if she knows the words in English she is being taught in her lessons, homework and tests can be easier for her, which may bring her a sense of confidence. Then, in lines 5 and 6 Cami complements: *“my parents can ask me something or a worksheet that I have to check on my own without studying or a test, that is also useful for me”*. In this episode, Cami is showing that for her, learning and studying English has an instrumental motivation, because the more she knows, can bring her to answer her parents’ questions and also enough knowledge can enable her to solve her learning questions in English more independently when Cami says in lines 5 and 6: *“I have to check on my own without studying or a test”*. Lastly, from this data it can be observed how adults’ discourses and traditional

schooling practices impact on children, who already at this age are driven and controlled by tests.

Extract nº 17 closes this subtheme by adding one last important issue raised by the children: they feel very fond of learning about animals because they can connect to their experienced of going to the zoo.

#### Extract nº 17

School 1	Date: 09/09/15
Participants: Ale, Naty, M	Type of activity: Pairwork 4A
<p>Line 1 P: girls and what do you think about this activity?</p> <p>Line 2 Ale: (a bit loud) yes!</p> <p>Line 3 P: yes, why? What things do this activity to make it...</p> <p>Line 4 Ale: there were things like animals, like hippo, giraffe, elephant (y no elePHant)</p> <p>Line 5 P: okay, elephanT</p> <p>Line 6 Ale: and monkey, they were in Buin Zoo (they related the setting with a setting that is Line 7 outside Santiago, something familiar for them)</p> <p>Line 8 P: they were in the Buin Zoo... yes? Do you like these elements?</p> <p>Line 9 Ale: yes!</p>	

Extract nº 17 above, illustrates how important the elements of a particular activity can make a change for Ale and Naty. In this interaction between Ale, Naty and me are talking about what they think about the activity we have just done, which was the last information gap activity we did. Each activity had a setting, and this one was showing the picture of a zoo (see appendix 3; 4A) When I asked the children what they think about this task (line 1) Ale starts mentioning the animals she could remember (line 4) and then she talks about a very famous zoo in Santiago, associating this with her own experiences. Animals as well as Santa (see appendix 3; 2C) were words/ topics that captured the attention of children the most due to the interest they have around these topics. Moreover, in conversations children often refer to their pets and even the toys they play with and the cartoons they watch are strongly linked to animals, therefore, some children at this age can be encouraged to learn English by



including vocabulary or drawings related to animals as part of their textbooks and material designed for children learning English.

#### 4.3.3.2 Subtheme 2.2: 2.b) English lessons at school can be boring and tiring (sitting and writing, etc.)

The following sub-theme attempts to show through each extract which aspects of learning English were children considered as “boring” or “tiring” when learning English in their own words.

Extract n° 18

School 1	Date: 25/05/15
Participants: Cami, Monkey, Pia	Type of activity: Individual Activity Interview
Line 1: P: and do you like your lessons? Line 2: Cami: no, because they are too boring Line 3: P: and what do you do? Line 4: Cami: we have to write (grumpy face) Line 5: P: you don't like writing Line 6: Cami: no	

In extract n° 18, during the interview session one the questions, was related to how they perceived their English lessons at school. In line 1, I am asking Cami: “*do you like your lessons?*” Then in line 2, she claims: “*no, because they are too boring*”, I wanted to go deeper into that question, so I asked her what kind of activities she does to learn English as in line 3 says: “*and what do you do?*” She says in line 4, that she does not like her lessons because: “*we have to write*”, showing her disapproval by putting a grumpy face too. By lines 5 and 6 it comes quite clear that Cami does not like writing for learning English.

The next extract (n° 19) serves to complement Cami perception in writing. In fact, Andrea, mentions again her disliking of writing and later in the interaction, she brings “singing” as an alternative activity she enjoys most when learning.

Extract n° 19

School 2	Date: 07/07/15
Participants: Andrea	Type of activity: Interview
<p>Line 1 Andrea: the first one with you is singing</p> <p>Line 2 P: with me? Why?</p> <p>Line 3 Andrea: because... I like to learn in English singing instead of writing</p> <p>Line 4 P: okay, very good, very good answer, so, your favourite activity to learn English is</p> <p>Line 5 Andrea: singing</p> <p>Line 6 P: singinggggg.... You like it more than writing</p> <p>Line 7 Andrea: writing</p> <p>Line 8 P: very good, why do you like singing? Why do you like singing more than being seated?</p> <p>Line 9 Andrea: becauseeee I'm learning more...</p> <p>Line 10 P: okay</p> <p>Line 11 Andrea: And I'm knowing (learning) more English and if you listen to a song you</p> <p>Line 12 are going to know it already</p> <p>Line 13 P: okay</p> <p>Line 14 Andrea: or if you are asked something and that thing is the song, you are also going</p> <p>Line 15 to know it</p> <p>Line 16 P: it's easier for you to learn a song</p> <p>Line 17 Andrea: yes</p> <p>Line 18 P: and what do songs have that you like them so much?</p> <p>Line 19 Andrea: they say beautiful (nice) things</p> <p>Line 20 P: okay</p> <p>Line 21 Andrea: and they are in English</p> <p>Line 22 P: okay</p>	

This extract illustrates, the preference Andrea has between two learning activities such as singing and writing. As Cami previously mentioned in extract n° 18, some children do not enjoy writing as much as they are asked to in their classroom. Indeed, Andrea says in line 3: *"because... I like to learn in English singing instead of writing"*. This passage serves

too, to illustrate how much children enjoy singing to music as an entertaining way to learning English. Interestingly, in this passage, Andrea is expressing her preference for singing since this seems that for her “*writing*” could be a boring activity. Later, in line 8 I asked Andrea if she liked more to be singing instead of being seated in the classroom, to which she reacted by saying: “*becauseeee I’m learning more*” and then she complements in lines 15 and 16: “*And I’m knowing (learning) more English and if you listen to a song you are going to know it already*”, bringing up how repetition can be also important for children when learning English.

Another important issue raised by the children was the importance of being allowed to move leaning towards, again, the relevance that active learning has for these children, extract nº 20 below, serves as to provide a reason why not being able to move is not a preferred way to learn.

Extract nº 20

School 1	Date: 25/05/15
Participants: Cami, Monkey, Pia	Type of activity: Individual Activity Interview
<p>Line 1: P: what else do you like to do to learn English?</p> <p>Line 2: Cami: the thing is that here (referring to the project) we can stand up and do everything</p> <p>Line 3: but there I have to be seateedddd... doing everything</p> <p>Line 4: P: to be seateedddd... doing everything. ...and you don’t like that</p> <p>Line 5: Cami: no</p> <p>Line 6: P: is it boring to be always sitting, right?</p> <p>Line 7: Cami: yesss</p>	

In extract nº 20, Cami is commenting about another aspect of learning that she does not enjoy such as being seated. In line 1, I am asking Cami: “*what else do you like to do to learn English?*” then in line 2 and 3, Cami explains: “*the thing is that here (referring to the project) we can stand up and do everything, but there (the classroom) I have to be seateedddd... doing everything*”. From Cami words, to seated all the times makes her not enjoy learning,

then I insisted and directly asked her in line 6: *“is it boring to be always sitting, right?”* to what she replies yes. In this sense, the idea of being active when learning mentioned in the previous subtheme, gains great importance, since it seems that according to children, learning could be better if our both mind and body work together, in the context of fun activities.

In extract n° 21 below, Anto goes a bit deeper when explaining what it feels like learning in a classroom.

#### Extract n° 21

School 1	Date: 27/05/15
Participants: Anto, Monkey, Pia	Type of activity: Individual Activity Interview
<p>Line 1: P: how do you feel working in the project?</p> <p>Line 2: Anto: good, because it's always fun to come here and work in pairs, with my friends</p> <p>Line 3: and we learn English here instead of being locked in the classroom</p> <p>Line 4: P: you don't like to be locked?</p> <p>Line 5: Anto: noo</p> <p>Line 6: P: and why else you don't like about the classroom?</p> <p>Line 7: Anto: that we always have to write</p> <p>Line 8: P: you don't like that you always have to write...</p>	

Extract n° 21 above was an interaction between Anto and me during the interview session. One of the questions involved asking children about how they feel working in the project as in says in line 1: *“how do you feel about working in the project?”* Anto replied: *“good, because it's always fun to come here and work in pairs, with my friends and we learn English here instead of being locked in the classroom”*. Moreover, Anto has commented in lines 2 and 3 that she likes the project, because they fun while working with friends. Then, by the end of line 3 she expressed her preference of learning English in the project instead of feeling *“locked up”* when working in the classroom.

#### 4.3.3.3 Subtheme 2.3: 2.c) it is useful for now and the future (making friends, travelling, studying, etc.)

The following extracts presented in this subtheme show how making plans for their future, even at their young age it is an exercise they are able to do and perhaps, they had already thought about what they might need for the future. Extract n° 22 below, presents an example of how my personal experience of studying in England influences someone's response. Ale links my experience with a personal desire; maybe doing the same and travel abroad in the future.

Extract n° 22

School 1	Date: 20/05/15
Participants: Ale	Type of activity: Individual
Line 1: P: why do you think that we should learn English? Line 2: Ale: for example if we want like you that did to go to England Line 3: P: so, what would English be useful for? Line 4: Ale: to learn more and not being speaking in Spanish only, it's too boring! Line 5: P: and why is learning English very important for you? Line 6: Ale: because if I want to go to England when I grow up I cannot speak Spanish? Line 7: Ale: I have to speak <i>English</i>	

Extract n° 22 above, takes place during the interview activity I conducted with each girl individually (see section 3.4.3) In line 1, I am asking Ale why she thinks that we should learn English at school (in her school this is a compulsory school subject, having four hours of English lessons a week). Interestingly, Ale responds to this question, by using me as an example, in fact as line 2 shows Ale said: *"for example if we want, like you, you did to go to England"*. Perhaps, the answer Ale gave for this question could have been influenced on the one hand by what I represented for the children to some extent by being with a person who studies in England. Later, in line 4 Ale adds by saying that English can be useful because only learning your own language at school gets boring: *"to learn more and being able to speak Spanish only, it's too boring"*. Ale's words, serve to suggest that children may be

intrinsically interested in learning English, because they have an inner curiosity for learning other languages in general. In the interview children grade their level of involvement by giving one, two, three monkeys to each question (for further instructions of the game, see section 3.5) In the case of Ale, she responded that learning English was very important for her by giving three monkeys to that question. In line 5 I asked Ale why she felt English was important for her, to which she responded by saying in lines 6 and 7: *“because if I want to go to England when I grow up I cannot speak Spanish? I have to speak English!* Ale refers back and remarks the instrumental and urgent need of learning English if Ale ever wants to travel abroad, pointing out specifically England. In this sense, it can also be said that Ale may be identifying herself with the example I set for this group unintentionally, especially when she mentions in line 6 “England” as a place where people can go and learn English. In addition to Ale’s words. At the same time, María, during her interview, also expressed reasons that are very similar to Ale’s. Indeed, when I asked María if she had preparation in English before joining the project with me. When I asked about “preparation” I referred (and explained to the children) to all the things they have to do done to learn English including lessons at school, homework, use of computers, songs, games, video games, work at home with mom, siblings or any other relative or important people such as other teachers of English or any memory María said that, she felt she was prepared: *“because I was interested in learning a bit of English, so like I wanted to learn another language too, I wanted to learn another language that wasn’t Spanish”* (school 1, 26/05/15, interview).

Travelling became a recurrent topic often mentioned by the children when I asked about the importance of English in their life. Extract n° 23 shows how Emi explains in a concrete life-situation of why English should be learned.

#### Extract n° 23

School 1	Date: 29/05/15
Participants: Emi	Type of activity: Individual
<p>Line 1: P: (laughs) why is English so important for you Emi?</p> <p>Line 2: Emi: because someone can travel to the United States and everybody speaks English</p> <p>Line 3: Emi: and one doesn’t know what to say because she didn’t study</p>	

In the episode above (extract n° 23) Emi states that learning English is important for her, because as Ale mentioned earlier in previous extract n° 22, we can use English to travel. In this case, Emi adds to her answer the fact if we do not study the language spoken in the country we are visiting pondering how a person would be able to communicate with others if she had not study enough English at school. In lines 2 and 3 Emilia clearly expressed: *“because someone can travel to the United States and everybody speaks English and one doesn’t know what to say because she didn’t study”*. In this extract Emilia goes a bit beyond my own experience and adds to Ale in extract 25 talking about England another well-known English speaking country: The United States.

Extract n° 24 is a part of a group discussion task, when we were talking about learning English and the things we do/ can do to learn English. The entire group was present, but Ale, interestingly, shares an example of how learning is also important and you need to be prepared when she goes to secondary school.

#### Extract n° 24

School 1	Date: 22/04/15
Participants: Ale, Naty, Emi, Cami, Rocío, Anto, M	Type of activity: Group
<p>.... Come from the previous interaction...</p> <p>Line 1: P: okay, one has to learn...Ale?</p> <p>Line 2: Ale: for example when, for example we go to year 12 they can make us read books in</p> <p>Line 3: English, we have to learn</p>	

Extract n° 24 takes place in one of the groups activities I conducted with the children. During this session we were talking about the importance to learn English. In this interaction, Ale in lines 2 and 3, points out that for her the learning English can help her to be prepared for when she goes to secondary school when she says: *“for example we go to year 12 they can make us read books in English, we have to learn”*, perhaps, implying that if we want to perform better in the future, they need to start learning at an early stage.

Extracts nº 25 and nº 26 below attempts to present that for children going to university is a step they would like to give in the future and in order to accomplish that successfully, it is necessary to learn English.

Extract nº 25

School 1	Date: 22/04/15
Participants: Ale, Naty, Emi, Cami, Rocío, Anto, M	Type of activity: Group
Line 1: (07:44- ) P: and why else do you think that English is more important? Line 2: Ale: so when he would be asked about words in English at <b>university</b> he has to say the words	

In extract nº 25 above Ale is referring to the Monkey and how he needs to be prepared if he ever goes to university in the future, he will be asked “the words”, showing again, that for children learning English the emphasis is mainly on learning a set of unknown-new words that need to be memorized and learned. As line 2 shows, Ale said: “*so when he would be asked about words in English at university he has to say the words*”. As the data from this study has shown, these primary school girls have the tendency of relating learning English as being asked words (lists of vocabulary) you have to learn and sort of memorize. The more words you know, then the better equipped you will be in English. Moreover, from line 2, it worth raising the issue of how adult concepts have been internalised at least at a surface level, especially when the children talk about going to “*university*” (Ale, extract 8, line 2) in the future or “*becoming a teacher of English*” (Rocío, extract 9, line 2).

Extract nº 26

School 1	Date: 25/05/15
Participants: Rocío, M	Type of activity: Individual
Line 1: P: why do you think is important to learn English? Line 2: Rocío: because if I am a grown-up and want to be a <b>teacher of English</b> I am not Line 3: going to know anything	



In this extract (n° 26), Rocío goes a bit beyond Ale in extract n° 25, since Rocío not only talks about attending higher education, but, at the same time she is more precise and as line 2 and 3 shows, Rocío expressed: *“because if I am a grown-up and want to be a teacher of English I am not going to know anything”* As I stated in the introduction of this theme, the answer Rocío provided can be linked to the closeness they had towards me, however, Rocío is not specifying that she wants to be a teacher of English, because she wants to be like me, it is an assumption that cannot be drawn or stated from this data. In relation to what Rocío said it could be inferred that not knowing what we are told to study at school brings a sense of insecurity for the children, since they want to be prepared for the future.

Worrying about others and empathy seem to be present for these children, Emi, in extract n° 27 mentions that knowing how to speak in a foreign language can also helps to make new friends. As I have mentioned before, children were often talking about friends or playing with others.

#### Extract n° 27

School 1	Date: 29/05/15
Participants: Emi	Type of activity: Individual
Line 1: Emi: because people from other countries could come and they can be his (referring to the Monkey)	
Line 2: Emi: friend and sometimes they can ask him things and we don't know	

In extract n° 27, Emi is talking about how people from other countries can be friends with the Monkey. Indeed, as in lines 1 and 2 she said: *“because people from other countries could come and they can be his friend”* and then she adds in line 2: *“they can ask him things and we don't know”* In line 2, Emi is addressing the issue of not knowing what to say if we make friends that speak English. In this sense, I believe that for Emi, communicating with others, is suggesting too that what underlies her answer is also a sense of “helping” and “welcoming” others. It would be hard to make friends if we cannot communicate efficiently.

Following the idea previously mentioned by Emi in extract n° 27, Naty puts herself in the situation of receiving a foreign classmate, where she feels at the same time preoccupation since she might to be able to provide help to this new person.

Extract n° 28

School 1	Date: 03/06/15
Participants: Naty	Type of activity: Individual
<p>Line 1: P: Naty, and why would it be important for you, to learn English?</p> <p>Line 2: Naty: because sometimes one never knows if a classmate from England, United States, China or France</p> <p>Line 3: States, China or France</p> <p>Line 4: P: okay if one wants</p> <p>Line 5: Naty: to ... to ask things she wants to do or stay or not or stay for work</p>	

In extract n° 28 below; Naty thinks that learning English can be important if we ever encounter the situation of meeting a foreign person by adding in lines 2 and 3: *“because sometimes one never knows if a classmate from England, United States, China or France”*, including more countries in her answer. Naty in line 5 says: *“to ask things she wants to do or stay or not or stay for work”*. In this case, I have the impression that Naty is not only talking about foreign people we meet at school, but foreign people we can meet in different contexts. When she said in to *“ask things she wants to do” “stay or not for work”* (line 5), Naty is at the same time is expanding the kind of foreigners would need help, not only children, but also adults that travel and need to make a living in the new country. This answer can also be influenced by the recent and sudden increment of immigrants’ arrivals in Chile, who, due to economic reasons are also bounded to live in the periphery of Santiago, as these girls do, showing to some extent a sense of hospitality; I can use English for collaborating, helping and/ or cooperating with people from other countries.

Remarkably, for many children learning English presents as a facilitator to provide help to people in need. In extract n° 29 shows Emi describing a situation of an accident and how not knowing English could become an urgent problem if we need to provide or ask for help.

Extract n° 29

School 2	Date: 06/06/15
Participants: Caro	Type of activity: Individual
<p>Line 1: P: why is it important for you to learn English</p> <p>Line 2: Caro: because if you meet someone speaking in English and you don't understand, you can use</p> <p>Line 3: Caro: English so we can understand what he says and also we can say if the person is injured</p> <p>Line 4: P: ahh! If the person is injured</p> <p>Line 5: Caro: yes, and &lt;he&gt;doesn't, &lt;he&gt;doesn't listen and &lt;he&gt;doesn't understand and &lt;he&gt; doesn't</p> <p>Line 6: Caro: listen and doesn't understand, you can talk to him in English</p> <p>Line 7: P: okay</p> <p>Line 8: Caro: and he will understand and he can take him to the inspectorates' office and then</p> <p>Line 9: you can have a bandage and to get the &lt;wound&gt; cleaned</p>	

In this extract Caro, shows that for children caring about others is as important as learning English for school, for Caro, being able to communicate in the mother tongue of others can help even in dangerous situations like having an accident at school or helping a friend that could be involved in a serious problem. As Caro says in lines 3, 5, 8 and 9:

*“because if you meet someone speaking in English and you don't understand, you can use English so we can understand what he says and also we can say if the person is injured yes, and <he>doesn't, <he>doesn't listen and <he>doesn't understand and <he> doesn't listen and doesn't understand, you can talk to him in English he will understand and we can take him to the inspectorates' office and then you can have a bandage and get the <wound> cleaned”*

#### 4.3.4 Summary

The second theme attempts to address what is like to learn English for primary school children as well as how they make sense of the importance of learning English in their life. The sub-themes were divided into the different aspects children mentioned. Firstly, the data is showing that mainly for the children learning English means learning set of words and vocabulary where you learn them by heart, often they said that they need to learn “the words” leaving space for questioning teaching discourses are interpreted by the children. Moreover, in sub-theme 2, children expressed what are the sorts of activities that they do not enjoy when learning English. Writing and being seated all day are common teaching practices that they do not enjoy and in contrast to the format of the project, they expressed that they would prefer a lesson where there are opportunities to move and draw. Later, sub-theme 3, displays how important can be English language learning for these children. Many children felt that English could be helpful in the future if they want to travel, study abroad or go to university and become a teacher of English for example, as well as, preparing themselves to secondary education in the coming years. Others, thought about more close events in the present such as improving their performance at school (in terms of having better grades) receiving and helping a foreign classmate, providing help in case of an emergency or just for the sake of making new friends and make this person feel welcome. Showing how children have intercultural awareness and empathetic feelings towards with foreigners, even at this young age.

## **CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, I will discuss the main findings of this study. I explore the perceptions and reflections shared by the children in the different tasks and activities during fieldwork. Firstly, I will open this discussion chapter by answering my research question and sub-questions. Secondly, I will talk about the concepts discussed in the literature review (see Chapter II) such as fun, play and motivation; and how the children who participated in this study made sense of these concepts, often employed in young learners' language education. Thirdly, I will discuss in detail the methodological contributions of this study, where I also critically reflect on the instruments I designed and employed for data collection. Discussion on how to take this work forward and the implications of this study for appropriate English pedagogy, teaching young learners and for primary school teaching education (pre-service/in-service teachers) will be discussed in Chapter VI (next chapter).

### **5.2 ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In this sub-section I will attempt to answer my research questions. I started this study with these questions in mind:

- 1) How do children reflect about their own English language learning?
  - 1.1) What are their comments, opinions, reactions and perceptions about learning English in general?
  - 1.2) How could young children be encouraged to reflect on their own English language learning processes in relation to working with specific interactive gap tasks?

Significant amount of time was spent in fieldwork working with two groups of girls in two different settings for a period of two years in a row. I dedicated time getting to know the children before I started conducting the activities that were planned as part of this ethnography; and this is why I managed to get rich interactive data filled with anecdotes, spontaneous comments and questions as part of the on-going conversations. At the beginning of this study, I had in mind very broad and exploratory research questions since I wanted to see first to what extent children could reflect about their own language learning. In order to do so, I attempted to do this by developing and implementing Phase one (see Methodology Chapter). After analysing that data obtained from Phase one, I decided to narrow down the scope of my study and at the same time add other kinds of tasks apart from information gap tasks (see section 3.9.3.1). I designed new activities that would help to encourage reflection from children about their own English language learning. I will start by answering the main research question: How do children reflect about their own English language learning? This research question emerged from an interest in discovering what was their conception of language and their ability to reflect about the way they learn and are taught English in Chile. In addition to this, I wanted to challenge each pair of children and see how they could be engaged and encouraged to think and talk aloud about the way they learn English. The objective of this ethnography was to provide significant time and to give space for children to express themselves. In phase two of this study more flexibility was allowed and the reflection stage became a space to really discuss what learning English meant for the girls in their own contexts. Furthermore, other activities such as the interviews provided also a space where I spent time speaking with each of them, individually, in a relaxed and more intimate environment. Having implemented these activities in the field for eight months for Phase two, I watched all 26 hours of recorded data and analysed selected episodes that showed conversations held with the children during the project. These metacognitive conversations unveiled the impressions these girls had on English language learning in their own context. The whole data set obtained from this ethnography serves to demonstrate that children at this young age (7 and 9 years old) are actually able to reflect about their learning experiences as well as the ways they are taught English at school. The nine children from both schools were actually very open when it came to talking about their experiences and opinions. Due to the children' young age sometimes they got distracted and went off tasks, but generally both

groups of girls were eager and willing to give their thoughts on the different topics we talked about.

In order to answer the main research question, it is important to mention that I discovered that for these children learning English means learning words or labels. As a consequence of this, teaching vocabulary seems to be regarded as the only content children have access to. However, further explanations on how to use the words taught in contexts or even providing more opportunities for children to experience English beyond simple games or colourful materials are often ignored. As I mentioned in the Analysis Chapter, for these children learning English is a matter of accumulating and learning words by heart or translations of unknown words of English into Spanish related to topics in the textbook such as the zoo, the classroom, parts of the house, numbers and colours among others. The children often recommended including other drawings in order to create new worksheets with different objects and in this way learn more English,

### **5.2.2 What are their comments, opinions, reactions and perceptions about learning English in general?**

During the reflection stage and with the reflection cards activity, I asked the children what could be done to improve their performances on the activities they completed in the project. The children proposed different activities or actions that can be taken and give a solution to their low level of English proficiency. The girls believed that if they learnt English well, then they could teach and share their knowledge of English with others. In addition to this, other ways to improve their performance in English suggested by the children were: to study more, use a dictionary or Google as a browser to look up unknown words and talking to a native speaker that knows more about the target language. Singing was one of the activities that children were really fond of. In one of the activities I adapted from the European Language Portfolio, I asked children to draw their three favourite activities to learn English. According to these children, singing is a good activity to learn English since it is fun and the act of repeating a song over and over helps them to know a song in English by heart, which, at the same time, provides sense of confidence since children feel that they are speaking in English when singing. Oxford, (1990) classifies repetition as a cognitive strategy that enables learners

to retain information and develop confidence to do an activity. If learners are given different opportunities to work in a task; they could have more chances to get better at it. Singing involves repetition as well as fun and enjoyment and these were all mentioned in the analysis chapter. Singing in this case is also related to the connection children made between having fun and learning better. In the data, children also expressed that repetition for them is linked to the feeling of enjoying a game so much that they would feel like doing it over and over as previously mentioned. Moreover, for these children, singing was also attractive because if they learned a song, then, they can teach it to their siblings or cousins or even to friends at home.

In regards to the opinions that the children had in respect to English language learning, the data reveal that, being able to move, write on the worksheets and use their bodies to mime unknown vocabulary were all fun activities and provided children a space to feel free and relaxed. Being seated all the time writing at school was an aspect of learning that children did not enjoy and were quite critical about this issue.

### **5.3. PLAYING AND GAMES FOR LEARNING ENGLISH**

As it was mentioned in the literature review “play needs to be taken seriously” (Mourão 2014: p. 1). As a matter of fact, playing was one of the most salient elements regarded by the children when thinking about what “good learning” could look like. For them, playing was also one of the most frequent answers when I asked: *what is your favourite activity for learning English?* Interestingly, children thought of playing as any activity that did not connect to traditional classroom exercises such as writing words on copybooks while spending long periods of time sitting still. At the same time, play was often associated with others i.e. social play rather than solitary play, in which they could act out to be the teacher of English, use flashcards to teach new words to the monkey, take turns to pretend to be the monkey; all the time being active and moving around while engaging in these activities.

As discussed in Chapter II, generally in the literature, children are described as active learners who enjoy moving, are good at miming and enjoy doing activities that include their bodies as well as being highly creative and enjoy playing with fantasy (Cameron 2001; Pinter 2006; Ellis and Ibrahim, 2015). In regards to classroom practice, incorporating activities such



as involving active learning and visual/ kinaesthetic learning can be highly beneficial for children. For example, well-known activities such as Total Physical Response (TPR) (Asher, 1977) connect language with a physical command and movement (Rokoszewska, 2012). As TPR suggests, the incorporation of active movement in learning has a great benefit. During the work done in the fieldwork children were encouraged to use mime as a compensatory strategy when necessary (Oxford, 1990). For example, children used gestures with their hands, used their fingers to draw in the air, moved their whole body and produced unusual sounds when needed (especially with vocabulary related to animals). For some children though, it was easier to rely on the use of mimes and sounds alone and some of them were reluctant to use English even though they knew how to say the word in English and how to give the instruction to each other (the cases of Naty in school 1 and Caro in school 2). The data gathered in this ethnography underlies the importance of incorporating visual, auditory and kinaesthetic skills within the development of appropriate methodologies to teach English to children.

The flashcards for example, provided vocabulary visual input for the children to either recall previous learning or for learning new words. The children were quite enthusiastic and frequently mentioned that they enjoyed the activities because they were “game-like”. The use of flashcards also allowed spaces for play during each session. Moreover, these tasks provided the children opportunities for being actively involved both physically and cognitively with their partners. Some children created flashcards on their own not only in the project but also at home. One child actually created a book of riddles with the help of her father and another girl created a coursebook with her family. Indeed, when flashcards were used at the beginning of each activity this had a positive impact on the children. Moreover, the flashcards provided a good opportunity for the children to practice the words and improve their pronunciation. It is important to mention that they also worked as a booster for motivating children’s active involvement in the information gap tasks. The flashcards went beyond their intended use of teaching; they were a good tool for reinforcing previous knowledge or eliciting vocabulary relevant for each session.

I designed the flashcards with the purpose of eliciting and reinforcing vocabulary before conducting the information gap tasks. Even though this was its only purpose the children transformed this activity into playing a game. Firstly, Emi and Rocío in our third

session (in April 2015) asked me if they could show the flashcards to the monkey instead of me showing the cards to them. Each girl took turns and they felt excited to take on a new role of teaching the monkey. Then, I invited other pairs to have a go and use the flashcards to teach the monkey. After doing this, children felt responsible about the monkey's learning and kept on using the flashcards; this became an essential element to encourage children's imagination and their willingness to invent games and create their own cards. Interestingly, incorporating the flashcards resulted in children sharing during the reflection stage that one of the things they do to learn English at home is actually play to be the teacher of English. Pretending to be a teacher of English was a game some children enjoyed playing. The girls explained to me that in this game one child acted as the teacher of English and used a little board to teach words they had learned at school to younger siblings or cousins at home. Examples like this in which young learners take on adult roles are a classic example of socio-dramatic play.

### **5.3.1 How could young children be encouraged to reflect on their own English language learning processes in relation to working with specific interactive gap tasks?**

Guessing and miming were two strategies children spontaneously came up in order to carry out the information gap tasks. Children mentioned that one of the things they enjoyed the most from the project was the idea of not knowing what was going to be done in each session, supporting the assumption that children enjoyed the element of surprise and when learning (Moon, 2000; Scott and Ytreberg, 1990). Indeed, Anto says that is fun to learn by guessing because *"I feel butterflies in my tummy if I make a mistake (...)"*(extract 9, Anto, interview, 27/05/15). Moreover, having the opportunity to give instructions to their pairs and use miming when words were unknown were fun elements they enjoyed. Miming often brought laughter because of the funny body movements or the noises the children made, which were also very important for them, quoting their own words: *"when we laugh we learn more"*.

## 5.4 INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES OF YOUNG LEARNERS OF ENGLISH

In the literature review chapter of this thesis, characteristics of children as language learners were explained. Publications related to how young learners learn often describe them as: energetic and physically active they like to move and play with others. Children are also believed to be extrovert and willing to speak out without feeling threatened. As learners, they seem to be quite curious and enjoy trying new ideas. They have a big imagination and very creative; they love to listen and create stories (Ellis and Ibrahim, 2015). These assumptions have great impact on how educational curriculum for YLLS is shaped, although useful, manuals for teaching YLLS also reproduce this tendency of generalizing and creating a homogenous image of what childhood is and/ or should be. Interestingly, the data obtained in this study serves to both support and challenge common ideas of how children learn English in a foreign language context. Indeed, the data of this study and according to my own experience while conducting this ethnography would help to support the idea of defining children as physically active (as shown in Chapter 4 subtheme 2.2: 2.b, extracts nº 18, 19, 20 and 21) showed how being seated always writing is an aspect of lessons at school that they do not enjoy and are quite articulate in mentioning their preferences. At the same time, the children were also very curious and reacted positively to the invitation of participating in different activities. They were also imaginative and loved creating stories about the monkey and us as a group. Moreover, they loved playing with people and learning for them was always better if it was done in the company of friends, classmates, the monkey and I.

I would like to pay special attention to the widely held assumptions that children are spontaneous and will be not inhibited when asked to participate in oral activities. Contrary to this belief, while conducting the fieldwork, I realized that not all of the girls were confident and willing to participate or talk immediately. For example, Emi and Rocío were both high achievers, however, they were not very willing to speak and say much, even during the reflection stage where they were invited to reflect about their own language learning in Spanish. This could be explained by a lack of personal confidence and the lack English proficiency; children are often shy and nervous because they are aware of their limitations to freely talk in English without having any guidance or help from a more proficient user of the

target language. Because children are traditionally believed to be not trustworthy, as a consequence of this, children feel the constant need of receiving approval and permission from adults while growing up, therefore when I asked questions like: “*why? why do you think this?*” represented a big challenge for the children, not only because these questions could not be appropriate to their development stage, but also because they are often not asked the reasons why they believe or want to do something. Because of these issues related to the power that adults have over children is that there is a great necessity to take the words of children seriously. Children should be considered as language learners with unique individual differences. In this sense, generic advice to teachers needs to be more balanced focussing on the fact that all learners have a unique and often very different characteristics compared with one another even in small groups.

#### **5.4.2. Games: Information Gap tasks**

Different ‘game-like’ activities were employed in this research as the main method of data elicitation. According to Hadfield (1999), information gap tasks are defined as communicative games for learning English in which one or two participants need information the other person has in order to complete the task. Interestingly, the worksheets I prepared, which were classic information gap activities, were quite popular with the children and managed to attract their interest. Other aspects that children enjoyed when working with the information gap tasks were that they were allowed to use marker pens and write on the worksheets (crosses, ticks, drawings). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the effect of surprise that the worksheets brought along to the children was very much enjoyed by them and this worked as a booster that motivated the pairs to work together, promoting collaborative learning. With regards to the Chilean context, playing games for learning English is presented as part of the didactic and methodology suggestions to promote learning in the curriculum proposals for the teaching of English in the first cycle of primary school (MOE, 2012). In these proposals, playing is directly linked with games. Recommendations for playing games in the proposals state “the main objective of planning games is to reinforce contents or new vocabulary through motivating activities for students” (MOE, 2012; p. 14)

but perhaps the guidelines do not state what type of actual games to use or further directions for teachers.

This study illustrates that games such as the information gap tasks could be employed as a way to recall grammatical forms and vocabulary items previously learnt by the children. As I mentioned in the Methodology Chapter, the information gap activities I designed were actually based on vocabulary and contents from the textbook distributed by the Ministry of Education in 2012 and 2013 for first grade and the first unit in the course book for second grade. Although the main focus of using the information gap activities in this study was to provide children a concrete learning experience to promote immediate reflection, children were also learning by doing the activities. In spite of the great benefits that encouraging children to learn by playing brings along, I cannot overlook the many constraints that the Chilean educational contexts present in this matter. As previously discussed in the Literature Review Chapter, Inostroza (2018) conducted a research study with fourth grade students in state run schools in Santiago using games. After the teachers received training and attempted to try game-like activities for a while, they initially reported that they managed to include creativity and hands-on activities in their lessons as well as being able to comply with their administrative duties. According to one of the teachers the children seemed more motivated to participate in English lessons and for them the lesson felt shorter and more enjoyable. However, despite the great benefits of language learning games, the teachers that participated in this study revealed that issues related to time, class size as well as the many administrative duties teachers have, impeded them to dedicate more time and effort to continue preparing such hands-on activities. This study serves to demonstrate that in Chile, school teachers have to undertake plenty of administrative duties as part of their professional responsibilities such as: attending weekly schools' meetings, completing paperwork, interviewing parents, filling in attendance forms, writing students' behavioural notes and at the same time they must plan their lessons, prepare teaching materials and mark a large number of assessment tasks every two weeks. Teachers are pressured to meet the demands of fulfilling the syllabus for each class by using traditional language teaching approaches mainly based on traditional grammar and vocabulary instruction instead of using hands-on activities like language games, which take longer to prepare. As a matter of fact, language games such as information gaps tasks take longer because it needs to be quiet. In addition to this, lack of time for preparation

constrains the use of games. For these two reasons, teachers usually tend to use more traditional methods to teach English (worksheets in the case of Chile; copying contents written in the whiteboard or do translation of sentences). In this sense, incorporating “free time to play” can become a real problem in terms of creating noise and movement that is not traditionally encouraged and tolerated, especially if the teacher is not very strong in managing the class. Lastly, I would like to mention that according to Mourão (2018) the best kind of play is the one that does not involve adults and is indeed child-initiated, contrary to what actually happens at school, especially in Chile where adults and teachers are always in charge of planning and deciding everything for the children. In order to address this gap in learning games, the information gap tasks used in this project can serve as an approach of how teacher-led instructions can enable child-initiated play.

In the following section, I will discuss children’s motivation for learning English regarding both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

## **5.5 MOTIVATIONS TO LEARN ENGLISH ACCORDING TO YYLS**

In this section I will discuss what were the girls’ motivations to learn English. Firstly, I will open this section by talking about the bond the children created with the monkey and myself. I believed that the most important value of this study was the bond of trust and confidence that we developed as a group. The evidence collected in this research shows that the sense of belonging as well as having fun in the sessions encouraged the girls to sustain their willingness of being part of the project and share their ideas.

Secondly, I will talk about the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations underlying the children’s perceptions of English language learning. Even at this young age, the answers from the children regarding their motivation to learn English could be categorised within the framework of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan, 2000). It is important to consider that as Pinter (2017) states motivation would be influenced and mediated by many factors surrounding learners, such as parents’ involvement or the role of the teacher of English (as a role model at times).

### **5.5.1 Attachment towards the monkey puppet and me**

I included the use of a puppet as a way to engage children's participation and get their attention during the long extension of the project. After conducting Phase one, I realised puppets can be used in many fun and useful ways. I based my work in the use of the puppet in Phase two on the work done by Kolb (2007). In this study, children felt highly motivated to work in the sessions, they always wanted to come with me and did all the activities, even if they were difficult. At the beginning of Phase 2, I encouraged children to engage in the project by inviting them to help the monkey learn English. This simple strategy turned out to be very successful and served as great motivation for the girls. Indeed, children felt really driven to work in the project because they could be with the monkey.

Every time I went to the school to fetch the girls, they would always first ask for the monkey: *"hi, miss Pía, did you bring the monkey with you?"* the girls demonstrated their love for the monkey by creating stories about him, be willing to teach the monkey words or English, wake him up if believed that the monkey was sleeping instead of playing attention during the session. The monkey was also drawn into different activities and the children produced free drawings for me with the monkey on them. The monkey also served as a good tool to lower anxiety when learning. Between the ages of six and nine years old children are still very fond of playing games and using toys, teddy bears, stuffed animals or toys to play. I could observe that having company or having something soft to hug or pamper provided a good alternative to tension relief. Bringing the monkey as part of the project was an attempt to actually allow a toy to be part of the children's learning processes at school. In the next section below, I will talk about how fun was an element highly appreciated by the children as a positive aspect of teaching and learning English

### 5.5.2 Fun

The children defined fun as having chances to enjoy laughing while learning, feeling free to move, being able to actually colour and work on materials such as worksheets, having chances to create their own English language tools for learning (like flashcards). The data drawn from this study serves to demonstrate that fun for these girls was deeply connected with the experience of having opportunities to be in a learning context that presented fewer rules within an emergent planning depending on what they wanted to do next. Children often used phrases or gestures to indicate that they were having fun such as asking: *“Miss, are we working on the worksheets today? Miss, can we do another one?”* They always had a positive attitude and showed willingness to keep working. According to the data from this study, it was discovered that children really (truly) believed that when they were having fun while learning they could learn more and better English. Fun (enjoyment) was one of the elements that the children recurrently mentioned when talking about the activities of the project. The opinions and spontaneous contributions of the children suggest that even at beginners’ level it is possible and satisfying for learners to engage in a meaningful speaking tasks with a partner. The information gap tasks provided space for laughter, guessing, taking turns, drawing, and spontaneous talk, marking with felt pens, among others. Indeed, the first theme: *“The nature of enjoyment”* (section 4.4.1. in Analysis Chapter) shows different excerpts in which children commented on the elements of the project that they identified as “fun”. The data from this ethnography revealed that is important to devote special attention to the effect that appealing characters for children could have a positive impact on their motivation for learning English in primary school. Studies in the field of motivation have been investigating ‘role models’ and how relevant people for learners may impact the motivation/ self-motivation as a catalyst to encourage people to learn English (Morgenroth, T., et al. 2015). Although, on the one hand it can be argued from this data that appealing topics of interest for children could help to foster their motivation to learn English, by addressing their intrinsic motivation. It is also true that the girls had interest in learning English because they could see how they could benefit from it in the globalised world.



### **5.5.3 Intrinsic motivation**

In my field notes, I registered a situation that got my attention. In our third session, Caro from School spontaneously asked me while I was taking the girls back to their classroom: “Miss, why did we do so little today” then I told her: *do you want to do more?* To what she says “yessss” (14/04/15). This reaction really caught my attention, because I felt like children were motivated to even work more and do more activities as part of the project, even information gap tasks that were challenging and required longer attention. Children certainly were able to keep sustained their willingness to keep doing more activities, but because of time issues, this was not possible to be done. Interestingly, genuine reactions like Caro’s and her willingness to work more can be directly linked to what has been discussed in the field of intrinsic motivation in psychological studies (Deci and Ryan, 2000). It is also important to mention that when children are engaged and personally enjoyed working in a task they feel like they want to do it more and more (repeatedly) and that often happened, especially with the information gap activities.

### **5.5.4 Extrinsic motivations to learn English according to children**

Before starting the discussion on extrinsic motivation, I would like to briefly comment on how articulate children were in talking about their extrinsic motivations to learn English. The data gathered from the questions related to the importance of English for the girls in the interview showed that many of the answers given by the children were related to future plans on travelling abroad or preparing for higher education. This is another example of how adults’ discourses influence children’s voices. Probably what children told me is because they had heard the future use of learning English from parents, teachers or other adults around them.

Interestingly, the data gathered in this study showed the importance of learning English for the children was strongly driven by a sense of instrumental use especially when stating that English would be a good help for travelling abroad, visiting English speaking countries such as England or the United States, or even other countries such as China. Furthermore, some questions from the interviews activity (see Methodology chapter) were related to discovering. According to the children’s own words, English is something

important and valuable for them to learn. The nine girls that participated in both Phase one and Phase two were also able to reflect and talk about the importance that English had for them and provided different reasons why learning English could be important in their lives. Indeed, all of the children answered that English was really important for them and they were quite articulate in expressing their reasons.

Hence, question 6 in the interview activity was included with the underlying purpose of discovering the relevance children attributed to learning English. I directly asked children: *“How important is learning English for you?”* After analysing the data obtained from asking this question, I discovered that most of the motivation of children to learn English was highly influenced by seeing the language as an instrument that will help if they want to travel or talk to foreign people in the future. In this sense, extrinsic motivation to learn English for these children was expressed in the usefulness, they believed, English could have in situations linked to travelling to England like I did or to other countries their relatives or close people to them have visited. Moreover, children also perceived learning English at school could help them to improve their school performance and become better prepared for upcoming tests and preparation for secondary school.

In the set of data collected in this study, children also mentioned that for them English was important if they want to become friends with a new classmate who speaks a different language, and it would be very difficult to talk or invite this new classmate to play. Interestingly, children shared their concerns when mentioning that not knowing English could impede them from providing help when a new classmate from another country needs help. Evidence of extrinsic motivation underlying children’s willingness to learn English was found in the conversations held with each girl. It is important to mention that English was also regarded by the children as essential in emergency situations such: *“English could be useful to help if someone gets injured”* or to simply establish relationships with foreign people. Indeed, the children mentioned that learning English could be useful if a classmate gets hurts and has an accident. As Caro mentioned in extract 29 in the Analysis Chapter, she thought about a fictional- situation where an English-speaking classmate happens to have an accident at school and her classmates would not be able to provide help or to bring the nurse to help, because they would not be able to understand what their classmate is saying or needing. Additionally to this idea of perceiving English as something to be learnt because it

will be of good use in the future, children also mentioned the fact of feeling prepared for the tasks that will come in secondary school such as reading books fully in English. These elements found in the data gains great relevance for contexts like Chile, where education is highly driven by assessments and standardised tests from primary school onwards.

Even at this young age, these children were worried about secondary school and how they would be prepared for more complex tasks coming in the future if they are not learning what they are being taught in these years of primary school. The explanation of these insights may be linked to witnessing their older siblings or cousins learning English and what roles English plays in their lives, since some sisters do actually attend the same school, therefore, children see how older siblings face academic challenges in higher grades of primary or in secondary school.

## **5.6 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS STUDY**

In the following sections, I will discuss contributions that can be drawn from the data obtained in this ethnography. Firstly, I will talk about the theoretical contributions of this study. Secondly, I will explain the contributions this study has in relation to the methodological approach and data collection methods I designed.

### **5.6.1 Theoretical and Policy related Contribution**

The findings of the present research study contribute to provide empirical data to the field of English language teaching with primary school children for a two-year period while children were between seven to nine years old. In this sense, the data collected and analysed could greatly contribute to the study of children in relation to how they learn as well as how teachers, practitioners and other adults (such as parents or caregivers) that are part of children's environment should teach English to young learners in EFL contexts. As it was earlier mentioned in the Literature chapter (see section 2.2) Cameron (2003); Pinter (2011); Garton and Copland (2011) detected how little space is dedicated to young learners in the field of applied linguistics in general and in particular to what their preferences and perceptions are about how they learn and how they are taught English at the primary level.

Therefore, new types of research instruments and methods are needed. More freedom and less control from researchers can contribute to addressing this issue. In this section, I will discuss and contrast what is stated in the literature in relation to how children learn English and how the data obtained in this study demonstrate that children can directly inform the development of appropriate pedagogies for teaching English to young learners.

## **5.7 METHODOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS STUDY**

In the following sub-section, I will discuss the contributions of this study in terms of the methodology I designed and developed for researching primary school children within the Chilean context. From the very start of this study, I was strongly interested and driven to challenge standard and traditional methods of data collection employed with children. Firstly, I wanted to see, how the girls would engage in activities, which were intended to promote reflective conversations about the way they learn English. In order to address this gap in the literature of researching children learning English in the first cycle of primary school in Chile, I started looking at different kinds of elements that have been previously employed to research children. I adapted these instruments of data collection into new ways of approaching the opportunities; freedom and involvement children are given when conducting research. I strongly wanted to make children the core of this study.

### **5.7.1 Contribution of the Instruments Employed for Data Collection in this Study.**

In this section, I will discuss how the instruments I designed for collecting data in primary school could contribute to the field of researching with children in EFL contexts such Chile from the experience I gained while conducting this research study.

Even though my fieldwork was organized under a tight schedule, collecting data in state schools, I believe that it is extremely important to provide extra time for each activity conducted with young learners. When I was preparing for data collection, I noticed that in many cases children were mainly asked to answer yes or no questions in research questionnaires that were aimed at collecting children's opinions. I was determined to do something different and go beyond that limited period of time and dedicate to each session enough time for children to think first and then share their opinions. In this sense, I did not

want to put pressure on the children and rush them to answer questions or carry out tasks. I attempted to plan a schedule that was open to changes in case children came up with any idea in order to respect and give space to their spontaneous reactions. At the same time, I really wanted to give as many opportunities to the children so their voices could be the most relevant aspects of this research study. In order to achieve this, I had to constantly change my plan and adjust the activities I had prepared. In addition to this, I decided to adapt activities usually employed to research children and introduce reflection and some sense of freedom as part of the data collection methods encouraging reflection by asking simple questions. I avoided using yes/no questions, Likert scales or questionnaire type questions usually employed to carry out research with children. Moreover, I decided to include a wide range of different activities to encourage children to reflect about their English language learning while I also provided them with opportunities to deliver their answers in alternative ways. The use of drawings or any other creative activities helped in this study to address issues related to boredom and instead offer a space for promoting creativity in the children's personal learning preferences. Furthermore, children were also encouraged to collaboratively share their choices and opinions in respect to tasks or activities they use for learning English. For instance, games such as information gap tasks could be also employed as a way use a concrete learning experience to reflect on meaningful experiences (Donaldson, 1978). The tasks I employed for data collection were game-like, easy to learn and very much likely to lead to success.

## **5.8. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND REFLECTIONS FOR OTHER RESEARCHERS IN THE FIELD**

### **5.8.1. Positionality**

In a more personal reflection I would like to talk about the abilities the researchers themselves need to develop in order to successfully engage with children in research. Firstly, my positionality as a researcher and the barriers of the communication process such as contacting stakeholders, teachers and the participants of the study affected the way in which I developed trust relationships with the children, and how they were gradually incorporated as active participants in the investigation process. Since I was not a teacher of the schools and had no contract or payment, I also had a confusing role of who I was and why I was working with these children. In each school I had to adopt a different role in order to introduce myself and get access to move around the schools without problems. For School 1, I was assigned the role of being a teacher of English doing her internship working with the children in second and third grade (even though I was not an undergraduate student), meanwhile for School 2, I was just a teacher working in an English project. For the children instead, it was hard to understand that someone my age that is already a teacher and had gone to university was still studying at university and had a teacher called Annamaria. I told the children at the beginning of the project that this was a sort of homework my teachers in England gave me and I asked them for help, because their roles were essential if I wanted to do my homework right. Secondly, after analysing the data from Phase one, I observed how happy children were when working on the information gap activities. This experience revealed a necessity to adopt a more “participatory approach” that actively seeks and challenges ways to involve children in research (Spyrou, 2011; Christensen and James, 2008; Kellett, 2010; Corsaro, 1997; James and Prout, 1990) and to strengthen the development of methodologies that attempt to involve children actively in research like the Mosaic Approach (Clark and Moss, 2011). During both fieldworks, I strived to incorporate elements of active participation along each activity of this ethnography. In this way, I attempted to address those issues specifically related to the role of children in their own educational contexts. This approach to researching with children was very attractive not only for the participants involved in this study, but also for the whole

school community. Many times, when recording or working in the activities, teachers and other students from the school would come and ask me questions about the tasks and why I was visiting the girls every week.

### **5.8.2 Participatory Activities**

According to the success of hands-on activities in this study, the data drawn from the children showed that it is necessary to incorporate data participatory collection methods. In this way, future research studies can combine more traditional methods of collecting data with more participatory research instruments that actively include children. This can contribute with updated data and at the same time challenge the traditional conventions when researching children, often far from their reality or areas of interests. In other words, it is important to look for and find games, activities and topics that may be appealing to young learners in order to invite them to participate in a research study. It is important to focus on developing an understanding of the challenges and underlying situations conducting research with children with the purpose of providing a wider variety of research methods allowing young participants to express their point of views. From my own experience I could say that researching children with the use of a participatory approach requires a great capacity from the researcher to be flexible, constantly reflect about the steps taken, willingness to adapt the research agendas and plans by listening and taking the opinions of children seriously while conducting the study as well as paying special attention to their spontaneous reactions and ideas.

Moreover, working with children challenges researchers to learn alternative forms of communication, and to widen the possibilities for implementing diverse methods of data collection, in order to develop an approach that would enable a better understanding of how children can be encouraged to participate in research studies. Having said this, I profoundly believe that it is necessary to carry out extended fieldwork in order to research children 'appropriately'. It is important to regard issues related to period of time spent in fieldwork. According to my experience, the great contribution of spending enough time at the beginning of fieldwork helped me get to know first the context that surrounds the participants of this study. In my initial visits to the schools, I discovered who were the teachers of the children,

what games they played, how friendships were shaped, how much time they were given for recess and how long they attend school. In this sense, the children and I needed time to get to know each other, therefore, planning and conducting long fieldworks is essential. Since the researcher is often a new person for the children, it is of great importance to spend time playing with the children, talking to them or going to events children invite you to which are not part of the research project. If the aim of researching children is to get to know their honest opinions and perceptions about any topic, I believe that is incredibly important to dedicate enough time to develop a bond between the researcher and the children (participating in the study) before starting the activities specifically related to the research study itself (data collection methods implementation). Lastly, I would like to close by sharing the biggest lesson I learned from this study, I deeply believe that the closer and honest children feel you, the more willing they will be to genuinely participate in the study.

## **5.9 SUMMARY**

This study investigated to what extent and how children could reflect about their own English language learning. Two broad research questions attempted to delve into the reality of English language teaching and learning in primary EFL contexts like Chile. At the same time, in order to answer these research questions from empirical work with children in the field, I designed different tasks and activities that would help young language learners to reflect by designing a wider range of activities. The information obtained from the long hours speaking with the children served to answer the research questions as it was described in this chapter and although young children are regarded as still concrete and not capable of developing higher order thinking such as metacognitive skills like reflection, the girls were able to be confident and articulate when encouraged to speak about their experiences as English language learning in their own contexts. In addition to this, interesting insights were revealed by both groups in School 1 and School 2. Indeed, children were able to discuss what they enjoyed about their language learning processes. In respect to this area, children mentioned having “fun” from activities like the information gap tasks, the interviews, and when they could answer questions through drawing. At the same time, children enjoyed the company of others and the bond we created between the monkey, the children and I. It was important for



them to have a friend to do activities with. Dislikes and aspects of school they do not like were part of the issues that emerged from the conversations were children were quite clear in sharing that what makes English language lessons at school boring is the fact that there is not real space and freedom to facilitate body movement as part of teaching methodologies to learn English in primary school. In addition to this, contributions were also discussed in this chapter, paying special attention on the methodological contributions of this study.

## **CHAPTER VI: REFLECTIVE CONCLUSION**

### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The following sections will be devoted to discussing my reflections on some recommendations for practice that can be drawn from the findings of this study. Firstly, I will start this reflective conclusion by discussing the implications of this study. In order to do so, I will draw out the significance of this study by explaining how this ethnography could inform learning and teaching practices in primary EFL in the Chilean context. Secondly, I will provide recommendations for pre and in service teachers and their future practice. Lastly, I will close this chapter by talking about my future plans for dissemination of this research study.

### **6.2 IMPLICATIONS**

In the following sections the implications of this study in terms of how it can inform different areas of English language education in Chile will be addressed.

#### **6.2.1 Recommendations for ELT in Chilean English education**

Although the main contributions of this research are strongly related to its innovative and creative methodology, it is important to mention that the main scope of this ethnography was to look at how children could reflect about their own English language learning within the Chilean context of primary school; specifically, the first cycle of primary school. As it was shown in the Analysis Chapter, children were able to express in many different ways what learning English meant for them and how these experiences are most likely shared by others. In the following sub-sections, I will provide some recommendations related to issues in the field of teaching English to primary school children in Chile. I will discuss too the challenges underpinning researching children and how they can reflect about their language learning.

### **6.2.2 Introduction of reflection and fun in English Language Teaching**

As it has been discussed in previous chapters of this thesis, very few studies have so far addressed young EFL learners and their views of English learning. This research study provides evidence that reflection is a realistic aim to incorporate into English language lessons at primary school with children aged between six and nine years old. Ellis and Ibrahim (2015) outlined in much detail how teachers could incorporate and develop reflection within English language teaching activities at mainstream schools in Chile. The authors (*ibid*) suggest that by using different types of plan-do-reflect cycles through different activities in the classroom, teachers can help young language learners of English to reflect about their own language learning within the context of a regular English lesson at school. With regards to my study, the children were also able to reflect, about their own language learning. Although the girls had very limited experience with English, thanks to the easy availability of technology, especially smartphones, the children had opportunities to look for songs or short videos in English, overcoming in this sense the lack of a curriculum and teaching materials.

My own study has also provided empirical evidence showing that the incorporation of the reflection stages in tasks can help the promotion of metacognition in English language learning. Incorporating reflection stages within the lesson plan can have a positive impact and can certainly enrich the future the English learning experiences of children. More specifically, the data gathered in this study serves to illustrate concrete examples of how primary school teachers of English could combine both language teaching and training high order skills such as reflection within their daily or weekly lesson plans. By incorporating space and specific times for reflection, the teaching of English could go beyond the understanding of a set of words in English around a certain theme such as the zoo, birthdays and classroom objects (among others). At the same time, the data collected in this study also serves to contribute to a re-thinking of materials that reflect the voices of children and the elements or aspects of English language learning that they regard as relevant and appealing

such as learning by moving, avoiding writing, laughing and having fun. Promoting the active participation of children in their own learning would encourage agency and autonomy.

Regarding the recommendations given by the children, I will summarize certain aspects that teachers and/ or material designers and policy makers could consider consulting when working with projects or materials to teach young learners English. Regarding the visual prompts I used, I would like to emphasise that children really loved working with playing and creating flashcards, instead of only using them to repeat words. Surprisingly, the flashcards became a magnet that children always felt attracted to because they could touch them and play with them. They also served as a good scaffold for reinforcing and presenting new vocabulary by actively involving children in their own role as English language learners. Working with the flashcards was a meaningful learning experience for the children and it can even be understood as a learning strategy (Oxford, 1990). The flashcard game did have a learning objective: learn and practice words in English.

According to the data drawn out of this study, if any activities undertaken at school were fun, children would feel the desire to repeat them again and again even at home. This idea can be also linked to the role of repetition in language learning education. Repetition as a strategy was also connected to singing songs, one of the children's favourite activities to learn English. They suggested that songs 'say nice things' and the more you sing it 'you will learn it by heart'. In addition to this, play was always regarded as very relevant for these children; they said that at home, they role-played being an English teacher showing that without the pressure of the school some of the girls were motivated to take this experience forward, in which teaching others (like the monkey, siblings, cousins) is considered a game. Children felt a sense of satisfaction when they could teach what they have learned, to others. Lastly, the incorporation of activities that were made in pairs and group work did have a positive impact on the girls. In fact, they mentioned that an element that made the project joyful was the opportunity to spend time with friends. They became friends with their activity partner and the other classmates that were part of the group, which happened completely naturally, since this was not intentioned.

### **6.2.3 Use of English in EFL Contexts**

With regard to the Chilean educational reality young children start only learning English as a compulsory subject from fifth grade (ten years old) in spite of the great efforts of the government that has aspired to make Chile a bilingual country. In contrast with this, the reality of teaching English in primary school is quite far from achieving the goal of a bilingual country. Teachers do not receive appropriate training, and therefore, many graduate teachers are not proficient in oral English and often have a great lack of knowledge in terms of appropriate pedagogies to teach English, especially to primary school children. At the same time, many English teachers are trained as primary school teachers and they teach English as well as other subjects even though they have little knowledge about the English language. The lack of time to prepare activities for teachers and the number of hours of English at school may be part of the reasons behind this. The children in both schools struggled initially to conduct the activities of the study, because of their lack of English proficiency. Due to their young age children also struggled to explain their ideas in their own mother tongue because of the lack of experience relating to talking about matters of learning. Therefore, the study of how children can reflect about their English language learning in EFL contexts like Chile needs to consider that children's answers should be expected to be mostly in Spanish (or children's mother tongue), therefore, higher order skills and thinking will be focused on reflecting about learning the target language not through it, but about it. Although L1 might be useful, it does take away from actual English learning, and therefore, the tasks that encouraged the use of L2 and the reflection immediately afterwards must come together for the sake of balance.

In addition to this, it is important to point out that the social and economic background of the children from this study became an additional challenge. Firstly, since English is not compulsory in the first cycle of primary school each school is free to decide whether English will be taught and how many hours from the syllabus will be given to the teaching of English within the schedule for the school year. In the case of School 2 the children had two pedagogical hours a week of English lessons; meanwhile, in School 1 they had four pedagogical hours a week. Differences like these ones in the teaching of English in Chile are strongly related to the amount of money that is paid as a tuition fee, as well as the access

parents can have to buy books from private publisher companies. In the Chilean educational context for these girls, for example, especially in School 2, it could be very challenging for parents to afford a course-book for their children to learn English from. Therefore, in School 1 and School 2, teachers have to work with no guidelines for planning. Together with this, since there is no curriculum for guiding the teaching of English to children aged 6 and 9 producing the daily plan is a demanding and tiring process. Furthermore, in Chile, for many years teachers of English were qualified to teach only secondary school levels and therefore there was a lack of appropriate training for school teachers of English at university.

Primary school teachers of English could benefit from the data gathered in this study. For example, since the drawings I employed are black and white, teachers can even adapt the methods of data collection used in this study and do what could be more appropriate for each context. The data of this study showed that children mentioned that they enjoy writing on the whiteboard. In this way, teachers can encourage children to answer questions on the board by having the chance to use a marker, regardless of their individual competences at writing.

#### **6.2.4 Implications for teaching and teacher training**

This research study could help to inform teacher-training education in both pre – service and in- service contexts. The ideas shared by the children during the fieldwork are extremely relevant if thinking about developing a curriculum, teaching plans, materials that would be truly children-oriented for the sake of their true understanding and enjoyment.

In the introduction chapter of this thesis, I discussed the challenges primary school teachers in the Chilean context usually face. These constraints are often ignored by future teachers of English due to the lack of information and research available about this topic. Moreover, teachers are trained at universities to teach secondary school (Barahona, 2016); therefore, there is a great gap in teaching English to young language learners in the Chilean context. This situation is changing progressively and from 2016 university programmes are offering training in both primary and secondary school. As a consequence of the lack of consistent materials and state curriculum to teach English in the first cycle of primary school, novice in-service teachers, due to their lack of experience often use activities or teaching materials taken from the Internet or manuals. Although this may be a quick solution for

teachers, there is no clear certainty if what they are using to teach English is appropriate. In this sense, superficial understanding of how young language learners are taught foreign languages will continue to be reproduced. Perhaps, teachers can learn about a simple gap tasks and how to elicit children's language, as well as their view about how to get feedback from children on a regular basis and what to do with this feedback.

There is a great necessity for a curriculum that can help to unify criteria and provide a useful tool for teachers of English to support their daily planning and learning progression between first and fourth grade of primary school taking into consideration the fact that books provided by the Ministry of Education does not aligned with the suggested guidelines advised by the same institution. It is because of these reasons that the data obtained from this study may contribute to develop a framework, which includes language practice and immediate reflection of the experience. Additionally, the data drawn from this study suggest that one way to alleviate labour burden for teachers is to increase the level of participation children are allowed in the development of teaching materials and their use in everyday practice within and outside the classroom. Perhaps, children could be encouraged and allowed to bring their toys, teddy bears, pictures, stuffed animals or dolls to school so they can use it to talk about colours, parts of the body, understanding and following instructions. In other words, children should be invited to incorporate their world, their interests; if they are actively involved in their English learning lessons at school, they will perceive English as a fun school subject that they will be willing to learn. These reflections can help to improve and answer the many questions teachers currently teaching at the primary level have.

Regarding English teaching, the data of this study serves to support what has been suggested by Haas (2000) in respect to the use of thematic unit planning, especially in EFL contexts where both learners and teachers usually encounter difficulties due to the limited exposure they have to English, as well as the limited opportunities to practice English outside lessons. Still, English is not part of their immediate life; therefore, it is not an urgent necessity. In this regard, I believe that appropriate pedagogies and the implementation of new activities in teaching materials for learning English should include Chilean characters and/or themes that are familiar and relevant for Chilean children learning English. For instance, there are cultural differences in holidays such as Christmas where in Chile is always in the summer; therefore materials need to consider culturally differences.

In respect to how in service- teachers can encourage their learners to develop metacognitive awareness; teachers can actually start by asking their students questions related to accomplishments and difficulties encountered by them while doing a certain task for learning English. By encouraging reflection, learners are engaged in their own process by becoming consciously aware of the actions that were facilitating or blocking their progress of learning (Fisher, 1998; Fisher, 2008). In addition to this, according to Ellis and Ibrahim, (2015) the fact that even very young children have developed metacognitive awareness to some extent is often ignored. In service- teachers of English, can act as catalysts in this process and help children to develop their metacognitive awareness in mainstream English language lessons. Indeed, teachers can give opportunities to children by asking them questions, where they can express themselves and talk about what it means to learn English.

### **6.3 FUTURE PLANS FOR DISSEMINATION OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY**

I will close this thesis by discussing how I plan to disseminate my work in order to have an impact in the Chilean context. Coming back to my motivations for writing this thesis I would like to put special emphasis on how important it is for me to disseminate this work in my country. Empowering local researchers is one of the many concrete actions that can be done in order to help encourage teachers to experiment with these tasks. In addition to this, this work can really help to build the foundation of Chilean educational research in English language learning and begin to close the present gap in the state curricula especially in more vulnerable contexts. The results of this study can be published in journals related to the field of researching children in applied linguistics studies. The methodology of this study can also be shared with teachers. This work can be taken forward by incorporating the active application of the tasks I designed in mainstream English language lesson at schools.



## **6.4 SUMMARY**

For the last chapter of this thesis, I attempted to discuss possible implications of this study in relation to the field of English language teaching and learning in primary school. Later, I reflected on some recommendations drawn from the experiences I gathered after carrying out this ethnography. I provided recommendations for pre-service and in-service teachers. Lastly, I briefly discussed how I planned to disseminate the results of this study.

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## APPENDICES SECTION

### APPENDIX 1: Examples of fieldnotes

- Tais, prefiere los miek colors.  
 - Trae informe primer año (con las niñas).  
 (ellas quieren verlas)  
 - recordaba el nombre de mi pape (Agencia)  
 \* Como se puede aprender más inglés?  
 → hacer flashcard de guid.  
 Vale → MAE-512 converso conmigo ayer  
 en el recreo.  
 'como una investigadora'  
 Trae actividades informe.  
 introduction tick to check if it is correct  
 Very good level  
 Se pusieron notas.  
 \* Cambiar a preguntas más concretas??  
 miss la queremos invitar al patio

Vale → Sofia  
 • Sofia is the first girl among all the others to include more  
 precise instructions including ~~the~~ numbering elements for example:  
 such as: 'Draw two eyes'  
 • But she gave kind of complicated instructions though  
 • Sofia is very smart ~~like all the~~, she finds a ~~good~~ way  
 to make herself understood with the little English she has  
 • Vale: miss estamos hablando en inglés lol  
 (because they were mentioning items of  
 clothes in English)

08/09/15 DAE

PROFESOR No lo alcuro a grakm, pero Pannaal por iniciativa  
 noia decide explicarle a ~~la~~ Fernandez, la instrucción que ella  
 no había entendido (do not colour the element you have)  
 Oupio la pizarrita para explicar y dio el ejemplo de dibujar a la  
 gatita Oriana.

Super fast at learning

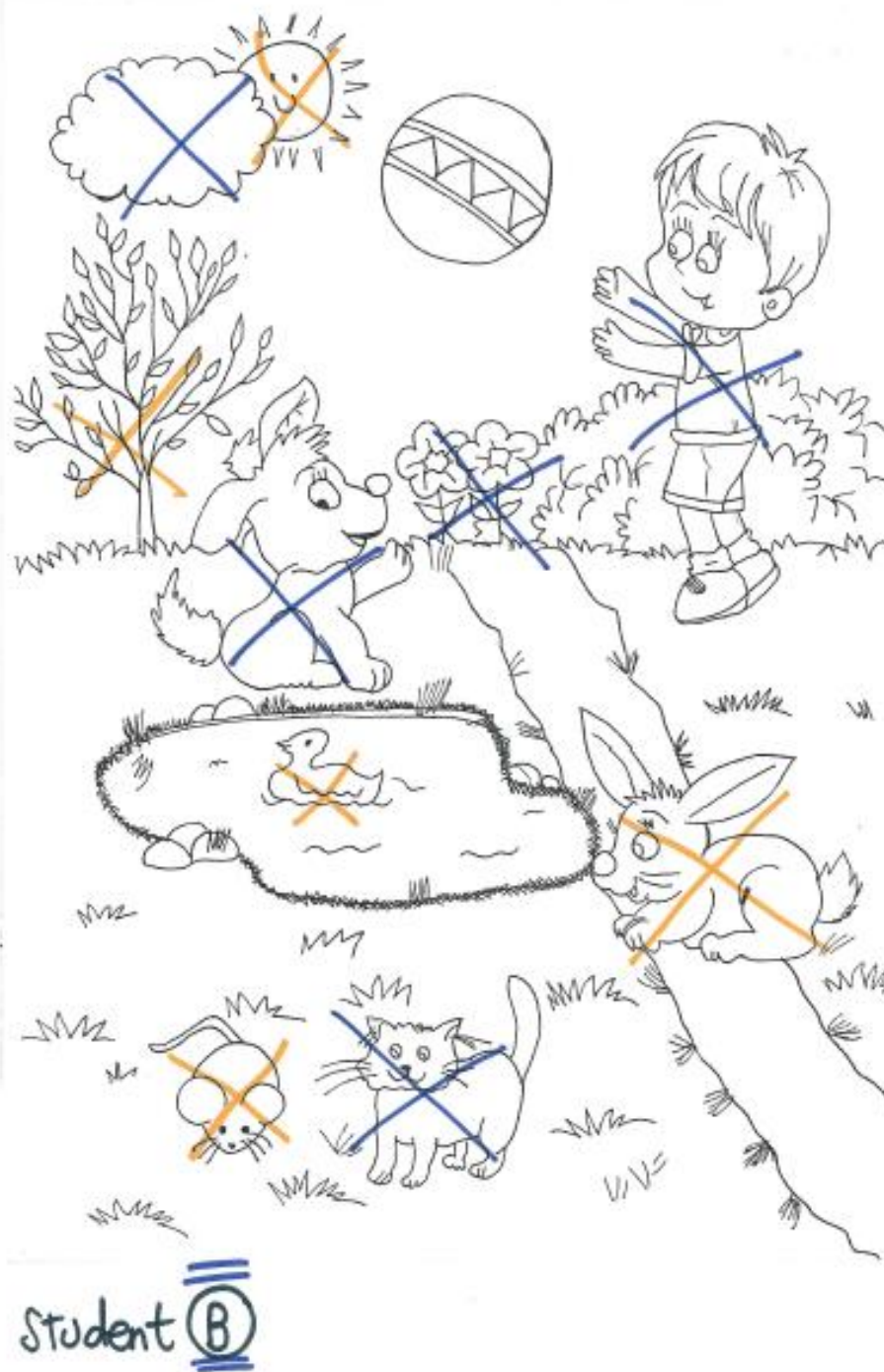
28/04/15

- No se saben los números → 15 tuvo que ser  
 one and five (go las ayudas)
- la Javi no sabe muchas palabras in general.  
 Everything is a bit more complicated for her
- tick shoes (unknown words + Javiara didn't get it)  
 very easy  
 le costó mucho
- lack of vocab (impressive)
- Julieta is extra smart, she knows a lot of English  
 and get the words very fast, it is easy for her to recall the
- Julieta started asking como se dice .... 'chanchito de ma  
 tierra en inglés?
- Javi struggles a bit more
- El chanchito de ferretal a lot of distraction.
- 'está por abajo' → yogur → Javiara (given more  
 specific instruction  
 but in Spanish  
 😊)
- Juli no entendió el drawing de 'teacher'
- upcake es muy difícil de explicar
- No se saben los números fue que ayudarla
- I had to encourage Javi to say 'sun' she knows  
 words, but sometimes she prefers to use sign  
 feel like asking her.

estoy obligada a quedarme

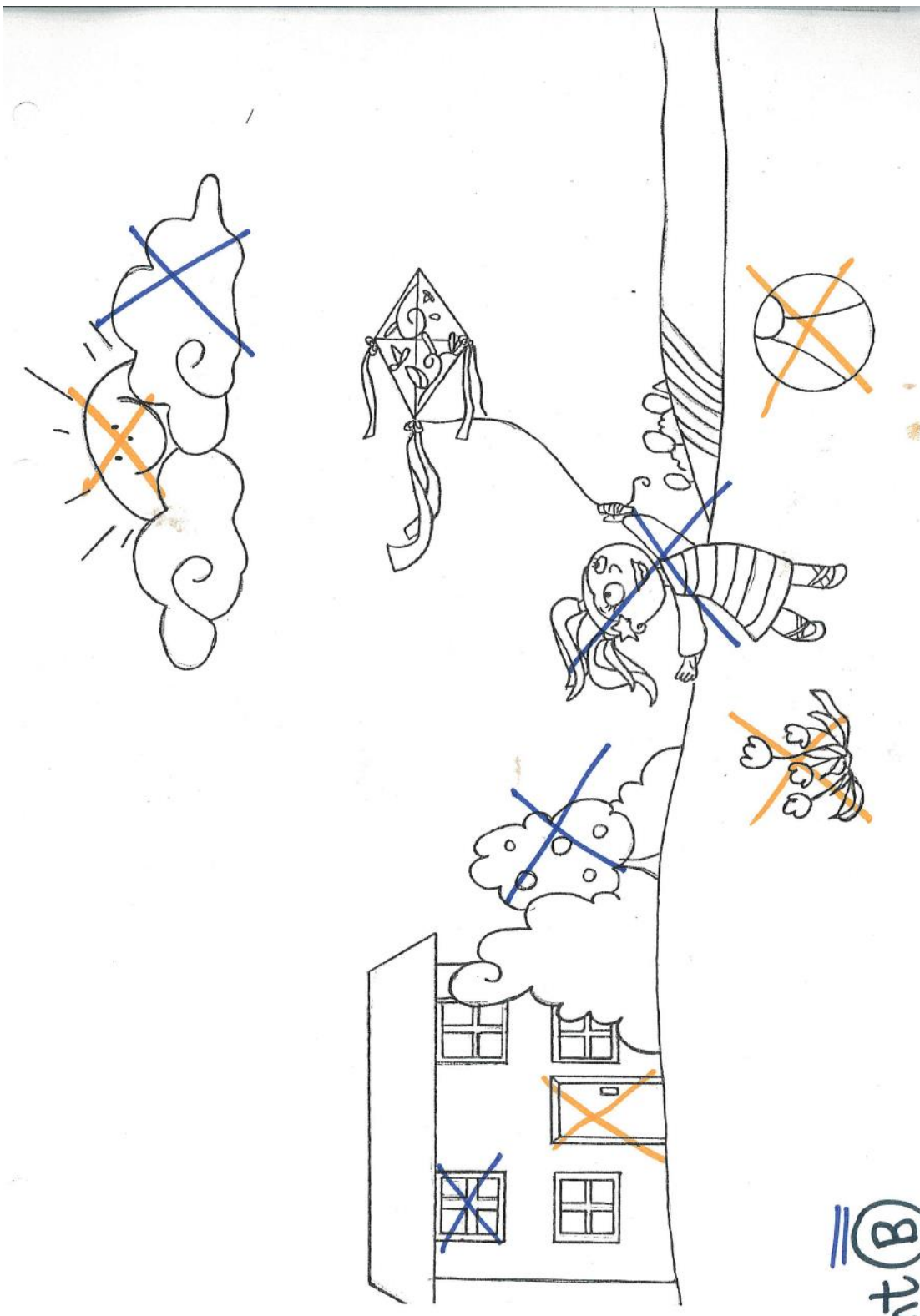
**APPENDIX 2:** Examples of information gap tasks used with children during Phase two

**1A**



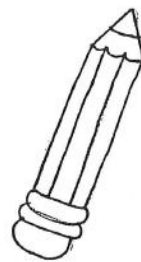
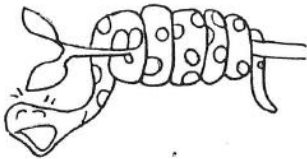
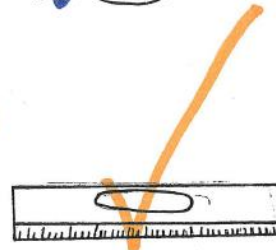
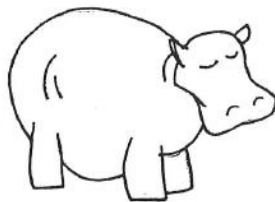
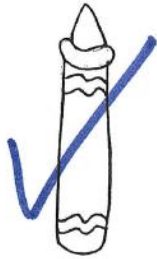


1B



11(B)

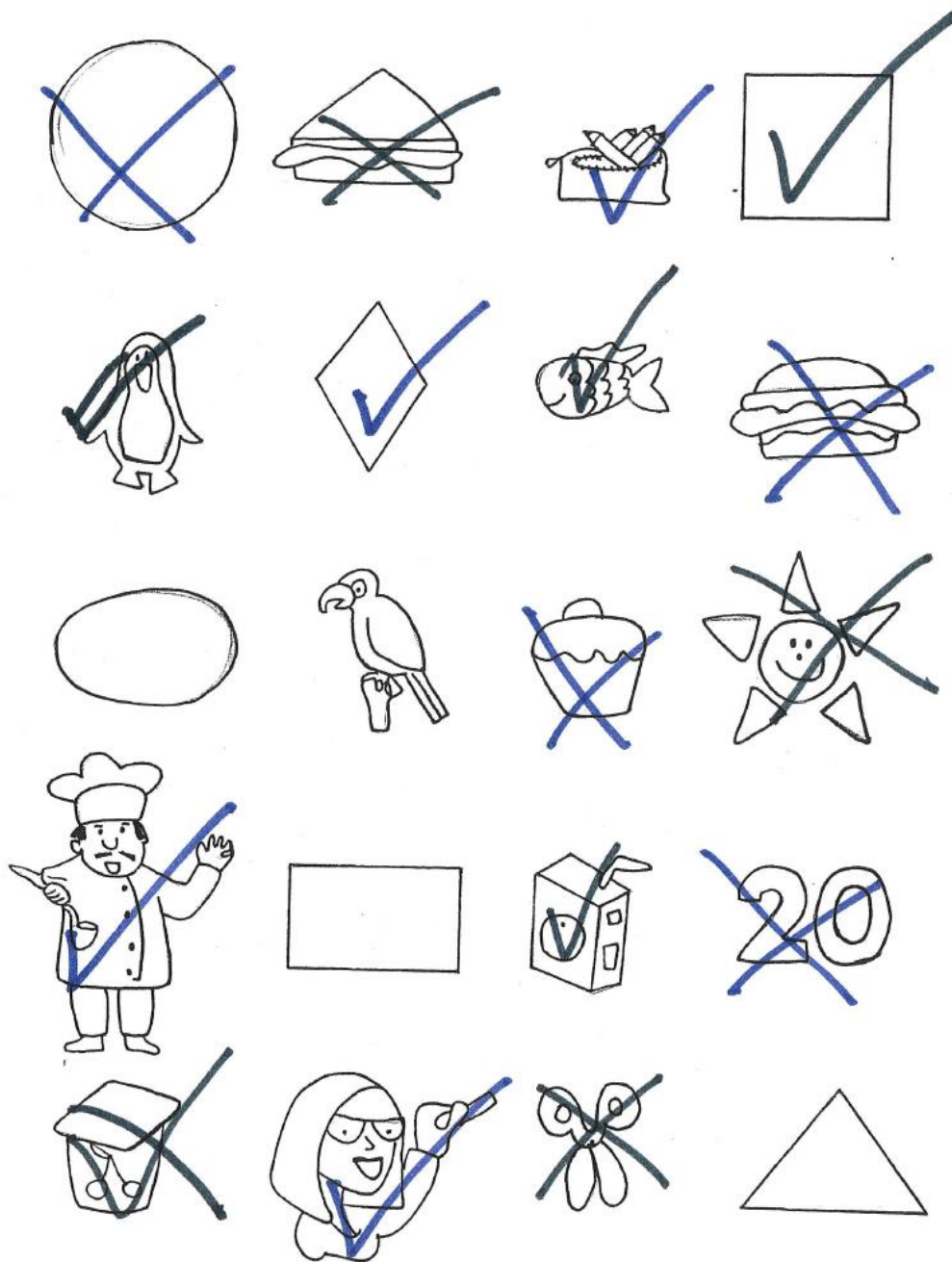
2A



student (B)

what's left?

2B



student (B)

What's left?

2C

Template

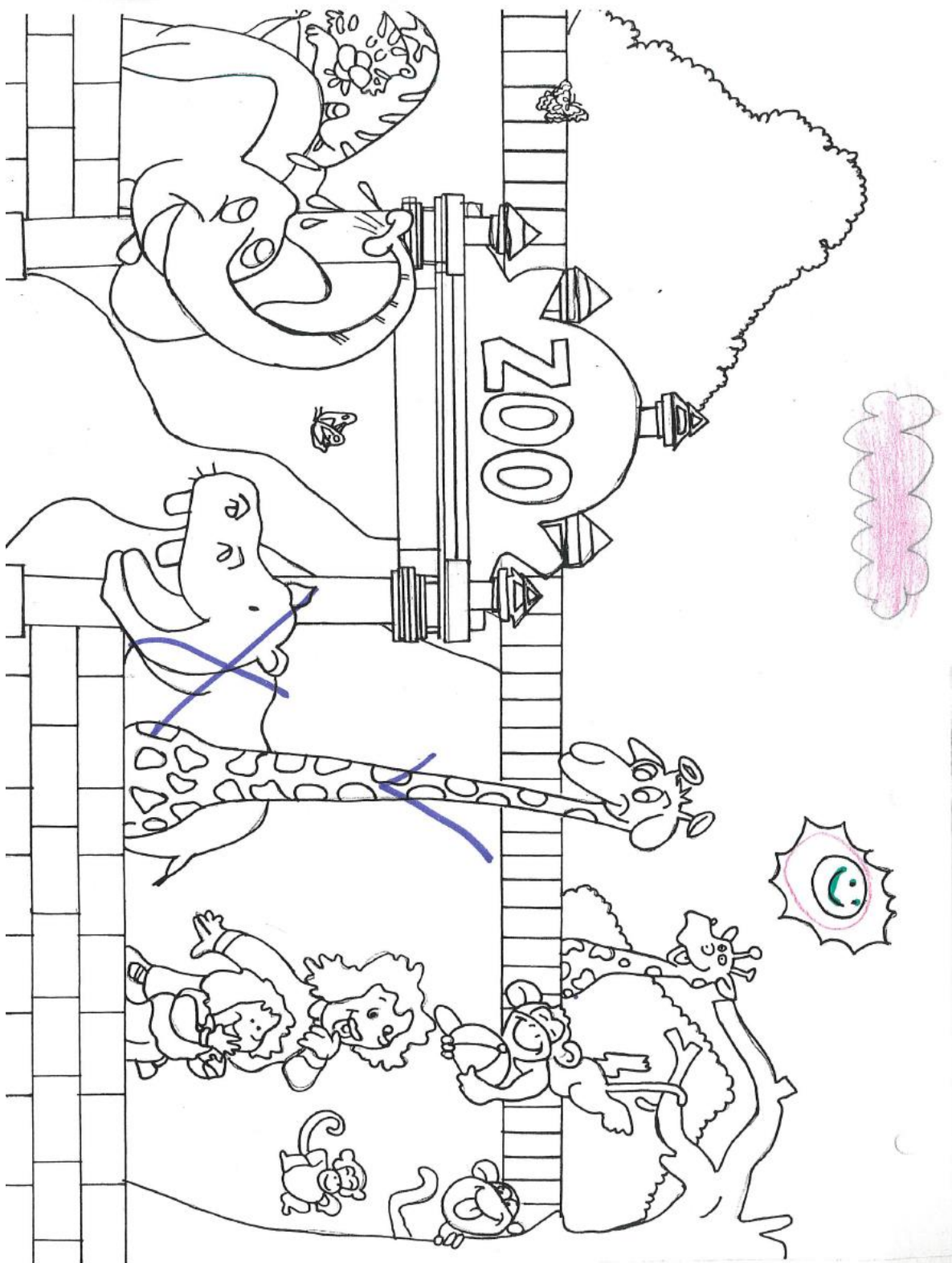
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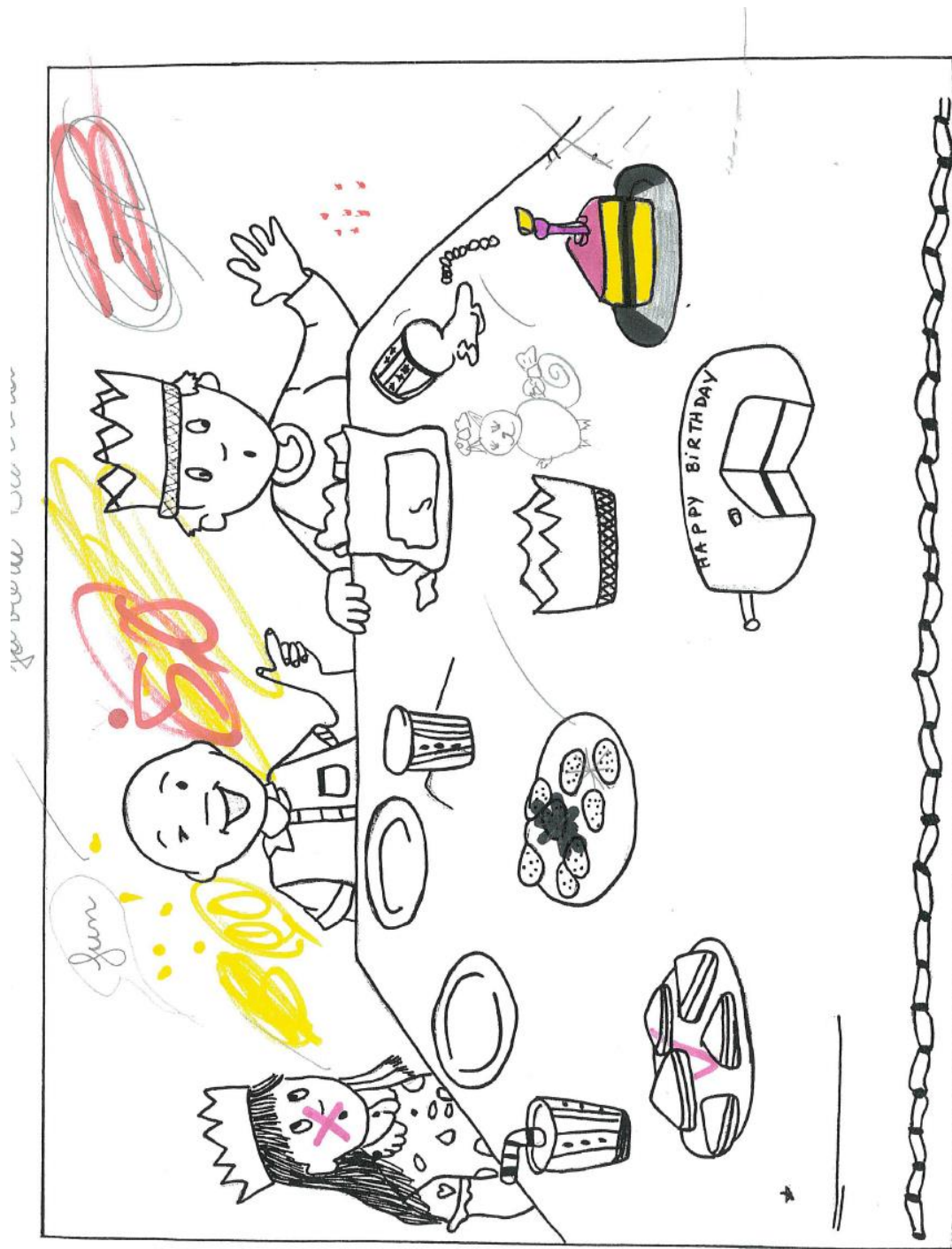






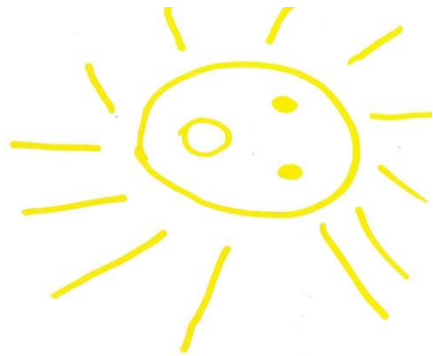
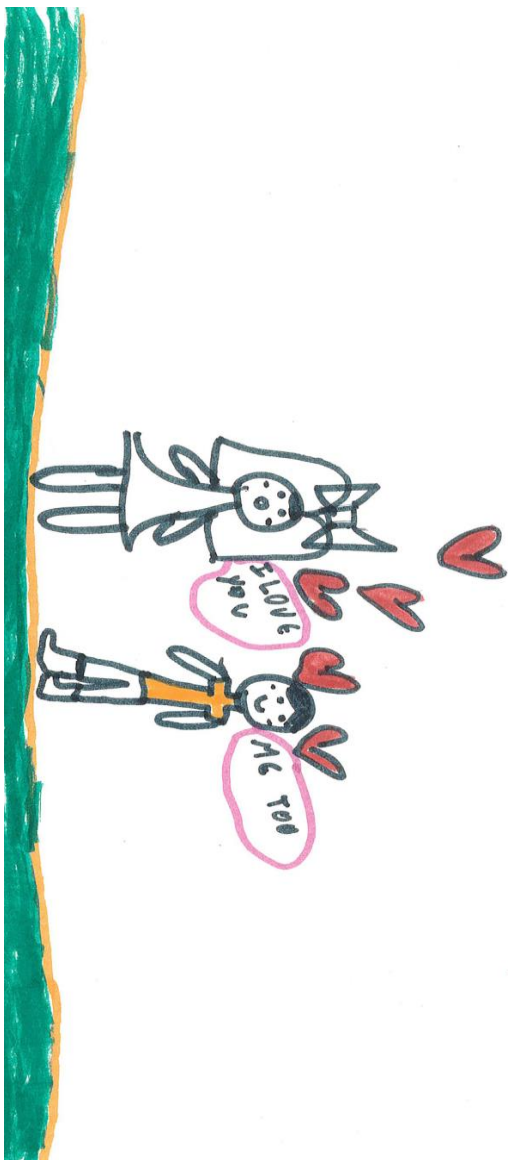
3A





### APPENDIX 3: How can you learn English?











## APPENDIX 4: OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED FOR PHASE TWO

### Phase two / fieldwork: General overview of activities

School 1			School 2		
Months	N. of sessions	Dates	Months	N. of sessions	Dates
March	1	30/03/15	March	1	31/03/15
April	10     2  2	08/04/15 (x2)  09/04/15  15/04/15  16/04/15  22/04/15  29/04/15  30/04/15	April	4	07/04/15  14/04/15  21/04/15  28/04/15
May	7	06/05/15  07/05/15  13/05/15  20/05/15  25/05/15  27/05/15  28/05/15	May	3	05/05/15  19/05/15  26/05/15

June	3	03/06/15 11/06/15 24/06/15	June	5	02/06/15 09/06/15 16/06/15 25/06/15 30/06/15
July	1	02/07/15	July	1	07/07/15
August	4	13/08/15 19/08/15 20/08/15 24/08/15	August	2	11/08/15 25/08/15
September	4	03/09/15 07/09/15 09/09/15 28/09/15	September	4	01/09/15 08/09/15 15/09/15 22/09/15
Total number of sessions School 1	30		Total number of sessions School 2	20	













## APPENDIX 5: CONSENT FORMS

### 5.1 Children's consent forms

<b>CHILDREN'S CONSENT FORM.</b>	
Participant's code: _____	
Date: _____	Session n°: _____
<b>TICK ✓ =YES</b> <b>CROSS ✗ = NO</b>	
1) I agree to take participate in this research study  <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> </div>	
2) I understand my participation is voluntary  <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> </div>	
3) I understand I am not forced to stay if I don't want to  <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> </div>	
4) I understand that my name will not be revealed and numbers and letters will identify me  <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> </div>	
5) I agree to be observed  <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> </div>	

\*Children will be talked through the form by the researcher in order to complete and fit in the form. This form will be revisited by the researcher during the study

## Spanish version

CONSENTIMIENTO NIÑOS	
Código participante _____	
Fecha: _____	Sesión n°: _____
<b>TICK ✓ =YES</b> <b>CROSS ✗ = NO</b>	
1) Estoy de acuerdo en participar en este estudio  <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">   </div>	
2) Entiendo que mi participación es voluntaria  <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">   </div>	
3) Entiendo que no estoy obligada a quedarme si no quiero  <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">   </div>	
4) Entiendo que mi nombre no será revelado  <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">   </div>	
5) Estoy de acuerdo en ser observada  <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">   </div>	

## 5.2 Example of parents' information letters and consent forms (English and Spanish versions)



CENTRE FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS

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Dear parents/guardian/caretaker:

From March 2015 your son/daughter is invited to take part in a small-scale research project I have designed that attempts to investigate how children can reflect about their learning process through information gap games within the Chilean context.

In order to collect the data needed for my study I will carry out observations on children working on games and activities in pairs. All the information that I collect about the children or the school during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. The participants (your child) will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications. Moreover, the audio and/or video recordings of the activities made during this research will be used only for analysis and for illustration in conference presentations and lectures. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any question or if you need further information about the study.


I would greatly appreciate your help and participation in this project.

Best Regards,

Pia Tabali Marin

MPhil/Ph.D student (second year)

University of Warwick



**Title of Research Project: “Eliciting children’s reflection through repetitive activities. A follow-up study”**

Name of Researcher: Pia Carolina Tabali Marin.

**Participant identification number for this project:**

**Please tick the box**

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information letter dated \_\_\_\_\_ explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project. ☐
2. I understand that the participation of my child is voluntary and that he/she is free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should he/she not wish to answer any particular question or questions, he/she is free to decline.  
(Lead researcher contact \_\_\_\_\_ / Supervisor contact \_\_\_\_\_). ☐
3. I understand that my child’s responses will be kept strictly confidential. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to the anonymised responses of my child. I understand that her/his name will not be linked with the research materials, and She/ He will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research. ☐
4. I agree for the data collected from my child to be used in future research ☐
5. I agree for the audio/video recordings collected from my child to be used in future research (their faces will not be identifiable) ☐
6. I agree to my child taking part in the observation. ☐
7. I agree to my child taking part in the above research project. ☐

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

(or legal representative)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of person taking consent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

(if different from lead researcher)

To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lead Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

Copies:

*Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/pre-written script/information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be placed in the project’s main record (e.g. a site file), which must be kept in a secure location.*

## Spanish version

### FORMULARIO DE CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

#### APODERADOS

Nombre niña: \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

Estimado Apoderado/a,

Mi nombre es Pía Tabali M (investigadora). Durante el año pasado su hija participó como parte de un proyecto de investigación de la Universidad de Warwick, Inglaterra. Debido a los exitosos resultados que el trabajo del año pasado entregó, estaré visitando el colegio Madre A. Eugenia (MAE) nuevamente durante el primer semestre del año 2015, realizando un trabajo de continuación del proyecto que empezó el año pasado. Estoy interesada en reforzar vocabulario aprendido por las niñas en inglés, e invitarlos a realizar tareas simples donde deberán dar y seguir instrucciones en inglés. Me gustaría poder hacer videos mientras las niñas realicen las actividades, donde se registre a las niñas trabajando. Asimismo, me gustaría conversar con las niñas participantes del proyecto. A su vez, cuento con el respaldo y consentimiento del colegio Madre. A Eugenia (MAE) para realizar la investigación.

Le agradecería completar el formulario de consentimiento adjunto, con su firma y fecha, y luego mandarlo de vuelta a la escuela a más tardar el día viernes 20 de marzo, de esta forma podré saber si su pupila está autorizada a participar del proyecto.

Si usted está de acuerdo, le informaré y consultaré a su pupila en el colegio antes de realizar las grabaciones. Ella tendrá que también consentir el participar del proyecto, así como también el querer conversar conmigo. Por favor, no dude en contactarme, si tiene consultas acerca de lo antes presentado. Cel: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED], correo electrónico: [REDACTED]

Yo (su nombre completo)..... autorizo a que mi

pupila (nombre completo de su pupila) ..... a ser grabado y

entrevistado como parte de este proyecto de investigación.

FIRMA: .....

FECHA:.....

**Todos los datos serán recolectados y guardados salvaguardando su privacidad y anonimato de acuerdo con las leyes chilenas de Proyección de la Vida Privada (Ley N° 19.628 de 1999), la Ley de Protección de Datos Británica (Ley de Protección de Datos de 1998), así como las Directrices Éticas de Gran Bretaña para Investigación Educativa.**

## INFORMATIVO PARA PADRES Y APODERADOS

### **TÍTULO DEL PROYECTO: Desarrollo de habilidades metacognitivas mediante el uso de juegos para la enseñanza de inglés en niños de primer ciclo básico**

Estimado Padre o Apoderado,

Mi nombre es Pía Tabali, profesora de inglés e investigadora. Realizaré visitas al colegio Madre A. Eugenia (MAE) desde la Universidad de Warwick durante el primer semestre del año 2015, ya que me encuentro realizando un proyecto de investigación en el curso de su pupila, por lo tanto me gustaría solicitarle su consentimiento para que su hija participe. Este trabajo representa una continuación del proyecto realizado con su pupila el año pasado. Debido a lo exitoso que resultó el proyecto el 2014, este año su pupila está siendo invitada a ser parte de la segunda fase de este proyecto.

El presente estudio es parte del proyecto de investigación doctoral del centro de investigación de lingüística aplicada de la Universidad de Warwick, Reino Unido.

#### **I. Detalles del proyecto**

Me gustaría invitar a su pupila a participar en un proyecto que tiene como principal objetivo conocer sobre las clases de inglés en educación básica. Estoy interesada en reforzar vocabulario aprendido previamente por las niñas y que ellos desarrollen diferentes tareas en parejas con este vocabulario. Me gustaría grabar en audio y video del trabajo de las niñas durante las actividades. También, me gustaría hacerles algunas preguntas a algunas niñas acerca de que aprendieron durante la realización de las actividades.

#### **II. Protección y riesgos**

- a) Información: Resguardaré las opiniones de su pupila; por lo tanto, no podré compartirlas con usted ni con nadie de la escuela. Lo anterior principalmente a fin de respetar la confidencialidad.
- b) Anonimato: Se protegerá la identidad de las alumnas. Se cambiarán o eliminarán los nombres de personas o escuelas. Todas las grabaciones serán guardadas y organizadas con un código, sin acceso a su información personal. De este modo, la confidencialidad y el anonimato están protegidos.
- c) Riesgos: Este proyecto de investigación no presenta ningún daño o riesgo para su alumna.

Yo, la investigadora a cargo del proyecto, mantendré un formulario de consentimiento en el que usted indicará si está de acuerdo en que su alumna sea parte de la investigación. Si está de acuerdo, antes de grabar, conversaré con su hija en la escuela. Ella también tendrá que estar de acuerdo en participar del proyecto y conversar conmigo.

Si tiene cualquier pregunta o consulta al respecto, no dude en contactarme por teléfono o correo electrónico.

Apreciaré encarecidamente su participación. Muchas gracias por su tiempo.

Le saluda atentamente,

Pía Tabali M.

Doctoranda en Centro de Lingüística Aplicada, Universidad de Warwick

Tel. Celular: [REDACTED], Correo Electrónico: [REDACTED]

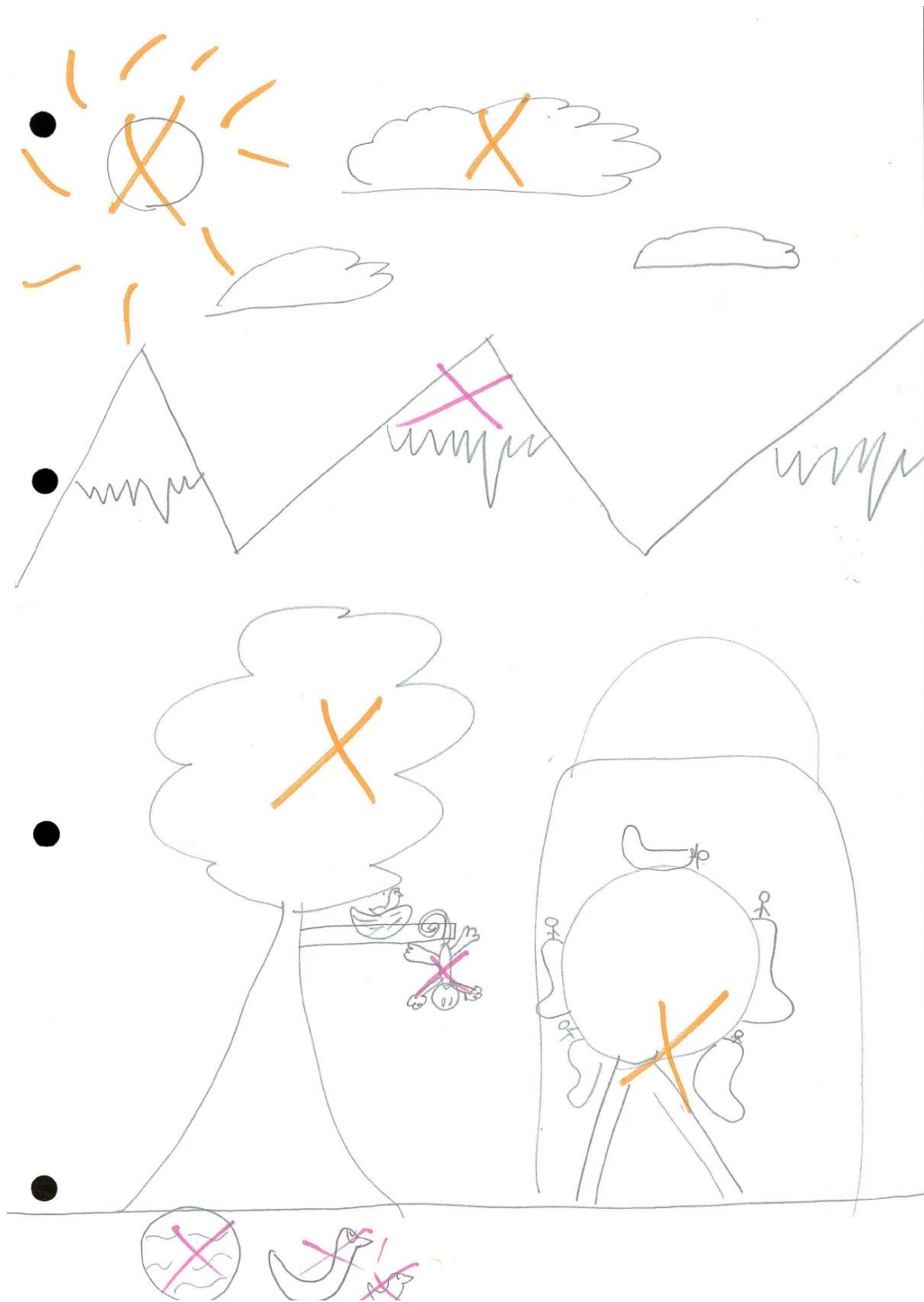
**Todos los datos serán recolectados y guardados salvaguardando su privacidad y anonimato de acuerdo con las leyes chilenas de Proyección de la Vida Privada (Ley N° 19.628 de 1999), la Ley de Protección de Datos Británica (Ley de Protección de Datos de 1998), así como las Directrices Éticas de Gran Bretaña para Investigación Educativa.**

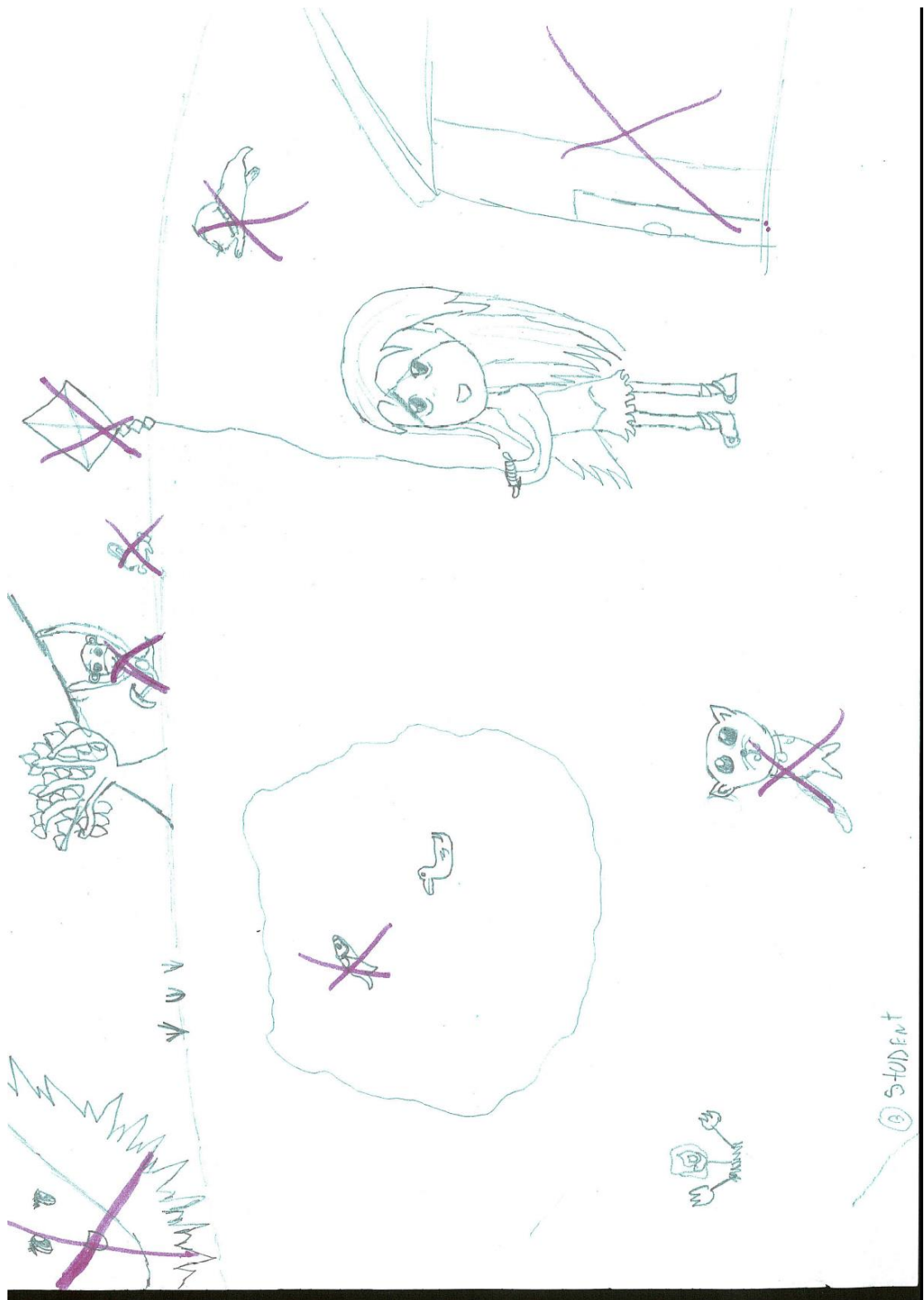
**APPENDIX 6:** Information Gap activities created and drew by children participating in Phase two













**APPENDIX 7: Examples of flashcards I designed for each information gap activity**







